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Celts

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# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Historical Reference

## Celts Campaign Sourcebook



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## Celts

### Campaign Sourcebook

by Graeme Davis

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## Introduction

### Who Were the Celts?

Mention the name *Celts* and different people think of different things. Some think of blue-painted savages fighting the Romans; others think of heroic Christian Britons fighting off the pagan Saxons. Still others think of Ireland, with its rich culture, its music, and its troubled history. Ask the question, "Who were the Celts?" and you're almost guaranteed to start a debate, if not an argument.

The fact is, the Celts were all of these things, and they are still around. Their culture stretches back three thousand years to the European Bronze Age, and it is still very much alive—not only in the Celtic lands of Europe, but in the New World as well. Celtic influence lives on in some parts of the English language and, above all, in the arts. Even in the 20th century it is possible to recognize Celtic influences in music and art— influences so strong and distinctive that they are spotted almost immediately: "That sounds a bit Irish; that pattern looks like it comes from Scotland—or is it Wales?" They're all Celtic and all part of the same tradition.

The truth is, the Celts were the foundation of many peoples and cultures that we know by other names, such as the Gauls, the Goths, and the Britons. They lived in what is today Spain and were known as the Iberians. They occupied Asia Minor and called it Galatia. They inhabited a great deal of Europe, but unlike the Vikings, the Romans, or other great European peoples, the Celts are seldom seen directly in modern popular culture. About the only popular Celtic image around today is the French comic character Asterix the Gaul. Yet the earliest stories of King Arthur arose among the Celtic peoples of Britain, and Robert E. Howard's immortal barbarian Conan of Cimmeria—arguably the most enduring character in heroic fantasy—was based on the author's deep knowledge of the Celtic culture and its traditions. Cimmeria, in fact, was a romanticized, latinized Victorian term for Wales; the land is called Cymru in its native tongue.

So there is no simple answer to the question, "Who were the Celts?" The Celts ranged over a great deal of Europe and southwestern Asia, but are known more as the background foundation for other cultures rather than as a single, unified tribe.

In the end, however, the legends and traditions of the Celts have provided rich source material for authors of heroic fantasy, and it's time the debt was paid. The world of the Celts is a wide, colorful,

larger-than-life place, encompassing the lands of more than a dozen modern nations and spanning nearly three thousand years of prehistory and history. It's the finest place for adventure that there ever was!

### About This Book

This sourcebook is more than just a setting for Celts in a fantasy campaign—it is a passport into the real world of the Celts. With the material here, DMs and players have a unique opportunity to try a different role-playing experience: historical fantasy adventuring.

Historical fantasy adventuring is just that—an opportunity for adventurers to role-play in the quasi-real worlds and lands of history. In this sourcebook, players are carried back to a time when history and myth were woven inseparably, right before the citizens of a city called Rome decided to rule the world. This is western Europe a couple of centuries before Christ.

In this world, players can assume the roles of noble Celtic warriors, wise and wily druids, and silver-tongued bards—in fact, the Celtic world is where druids and bards originated in history. Players can adventure and explore in a realistic fantasy world—the world as the Celts themselves believed it to be. There, adventures can range beyond history to include deadly encounters with evil, brutish fomorians, beautiful but inhuman Sidhe (the Celtic concept of the elf), treacherous and powerful enchanters, monstrous hags, terrifying dragons, and other monsters of all kinds. Characters can have the mixed blessing of Sidhe blood and birth-gifts counterbalanced by a fateful geas.

Celtic adventurers can encounter neighboring cultures and sail to other lands, either real or mythical. The Irish monk Saint Brendan is said to have reached America some time before the Vikings, and the Welsh Prince Morgan found a land in the West earlier still. Somewhere in the West, according to legend, lies Tir Nan Og, the Isles of the Blessed—did the Celts know of Atlantis?

Finally, this sourcebook can be used to create a Celtic setting in other campaign worlds. Details are given on placing and adapting Celtic culture and beliefs into the FORGOTTEN REALMS®, GREYHAWK®, and DRAGONLANCE® campaigns, and instructions on adapting the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook* to the DM's personal campaign are also provided.



## How to Get Started

For those unfamiliar with the history of the Celts, a brief overview is given in the next chapter, "A Mini-Course in Celtic History." Players already familiar with the culture and its history can skip the next chapter if they wish. It is intended to provide a general background of the period, not to create experts in Celtic history and prehistory.

At some point, the DM must decide what type of campaign is desired. The material in this book is written with a historical fantasy campaign in mind, set in western Europe before the coming of the Romans, but where magic is real and monsters walk the land. Reading through the material beforehand will give the DM a better understanding of the options available when he is ready to select a campaign style. If the DM intends to use the setting in his own campaign world, he should make notes or changes as needed while reading.

Although the chapters of this book are presented in a convenient sequence, each chapter stands alone, and the chapters can be read in any order. Player character information and game rules are in the first part of the book. The rest of the book is taken up by details about the Celtic culture and way of life, both real and legendary. Some readers might want to learn about character classes, magic, and monsters right away; others might prefer to learn about the setting and culture before getting down to rules and other specifics. DMs and players are welcome to read the chapters that most interest them, in any order they desire.

Before beginning a Celtic campaign, the DM should have read through everything in this book at least once. When the campaign begins, this book should be used as a resource, just like any other rule book or gazetteer. The maps in this book provide the campaign base and larger area maps of the true world. The DM can expand on these as the campaign grows.

### The *Celts Campaign Sourcebook* and AD&D® 2nd Edition Rules

This sourcebook is meant to be used with the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. However, the AD&D rules reflect the apparent realities of a fantasy world, not the real world nor the world as perceived by the Celts. Therefore, certain changes, exceptions, and prohibitions exist in these rules that do not apply to a normal fantasy campaign. For

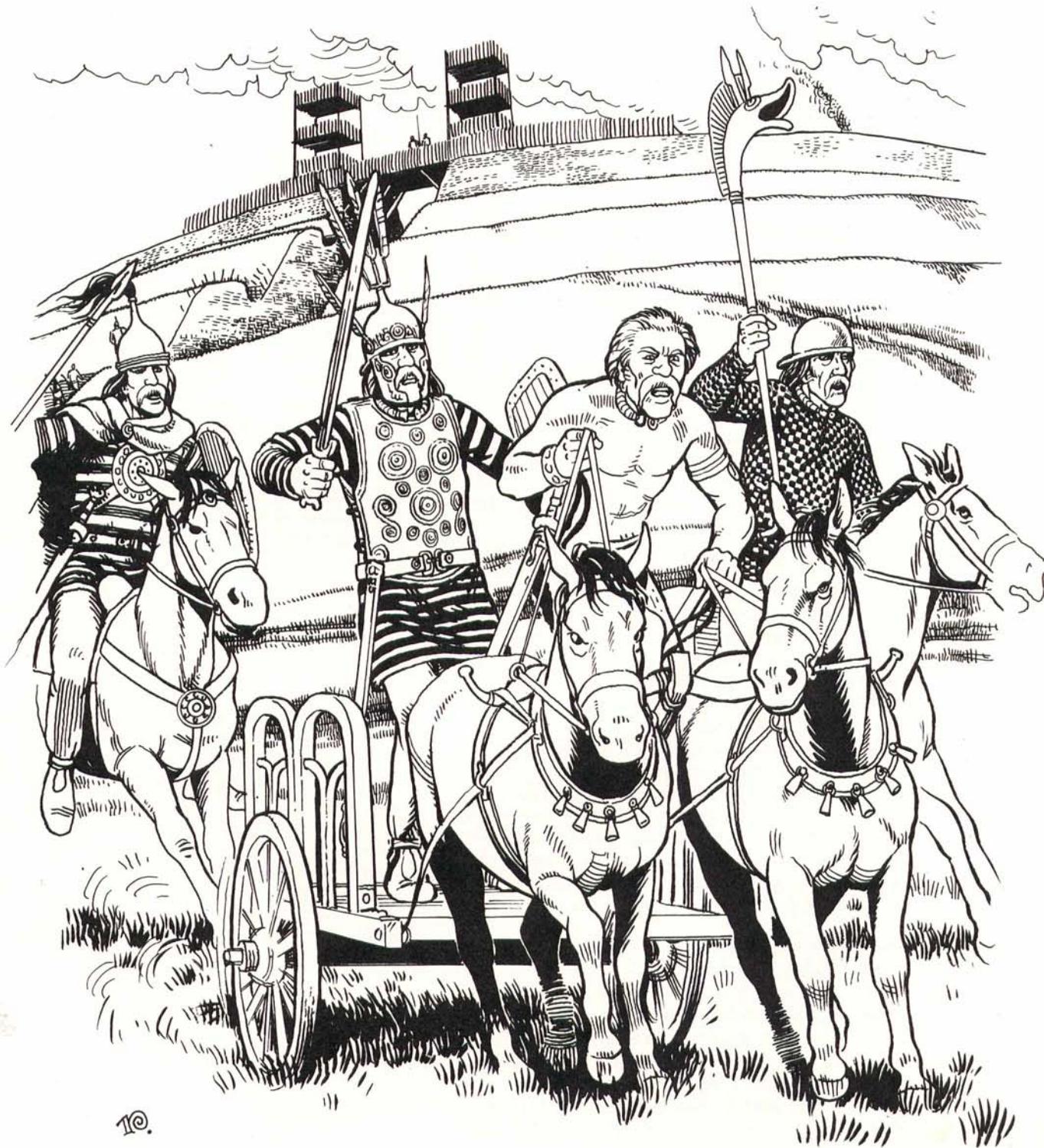
### What's in a Name?

The Romans called them *Galli*—Gauls—after the lands in which they first encountered them. The Greeks called them *Keltoi*—Celts—claiming that this was what they called themselves. Today, the term Celts is still used for the culture as a whole, with Gauls referring to those in the area of modern France and Belgium who were conquered by Julius Caesar in the first century A.D.

Even today, there is some debate over how the word *Celt* is pronounced. Is it "Kelt" or "Selt"? Many people favor the soft c sound. (After all, whoever heard of the Boston "Keltics," or Glasgow "Keltic" football club?) But in that case, why did the ancient Greeks—whose alphabet does not have the letter c—call them *Keltoi* and not *Seltoi*? In the English language—and more importantly, in most of the modern Celtic lands—the hard c pronunciation ("Kelt") is regarded as proper. The French and the Celtic-speaking Bretons prefer the soft c. Ultimately, it's a matter of personal choice.

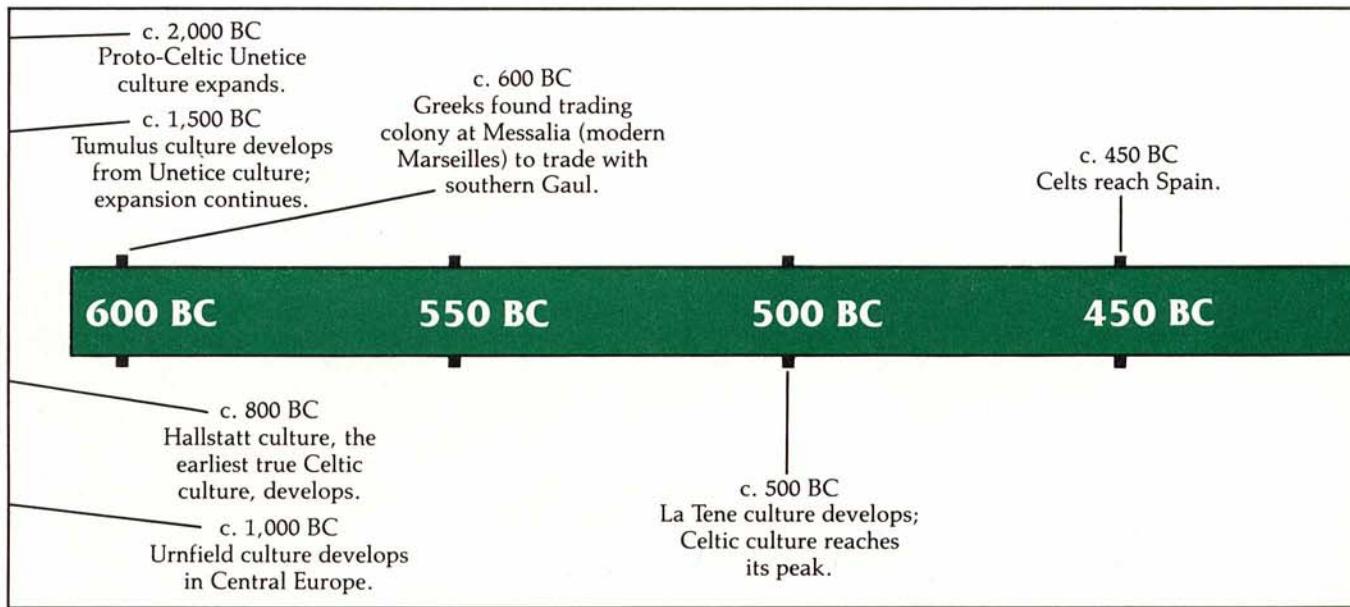
example, the druids and bards in this book are very different from the druids and bards of the *Player's Handbook*.

When playing in a historical Celtic setting, the rules in this book take precedence over those in the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and other accessories if there is any conflict or contradiction. These changes ensure that the style and mood of the campaign will match the Celtic setting. Of course, not all campaigns will use the historical setting given in this book. In other campaign worlds, certain rules presented in this sourcebook may not apply or may need some modification. Notes are given on adapting the information in this sourcebook to fit other campaign worlds.



10.

## A Mini-Course of Celtic History



### The Beginning

The origins of the Celts are lost in prehistory, but most scholars now agree that the Unetice (oo-nuh-TID-zuh) or Urnfield Culture of Bronze Age Czechoslovakia is the most likely origin. The bronzeworkers of this culture, which was active around 2,000 B.C., used ornamental designs that were very similar to those of the Iron Age Celts.

By the 2nd century B.C., the Celts occupied an area stretching from modern Czechoslovakia in the east to Ireland in the west, and from Scotland in the north to Spain in the south. Although the area was broken into many petty kingdoms and tribal domains, the culture and way of life remained the same, as did (with regional differences) the language. The height of Celtic culture lasted from the 5th century B.C. until the Roman Empire conquered most of the Celtic heartland.

Because the Celts were not a literate culture, very little of their early history survives, so we are forced to rely upon the observations of other cultures with whom they came into contact. For the most part, we are obliged to see the Celts not through their own eyes, but through the eyes of the Greeks and Romans.

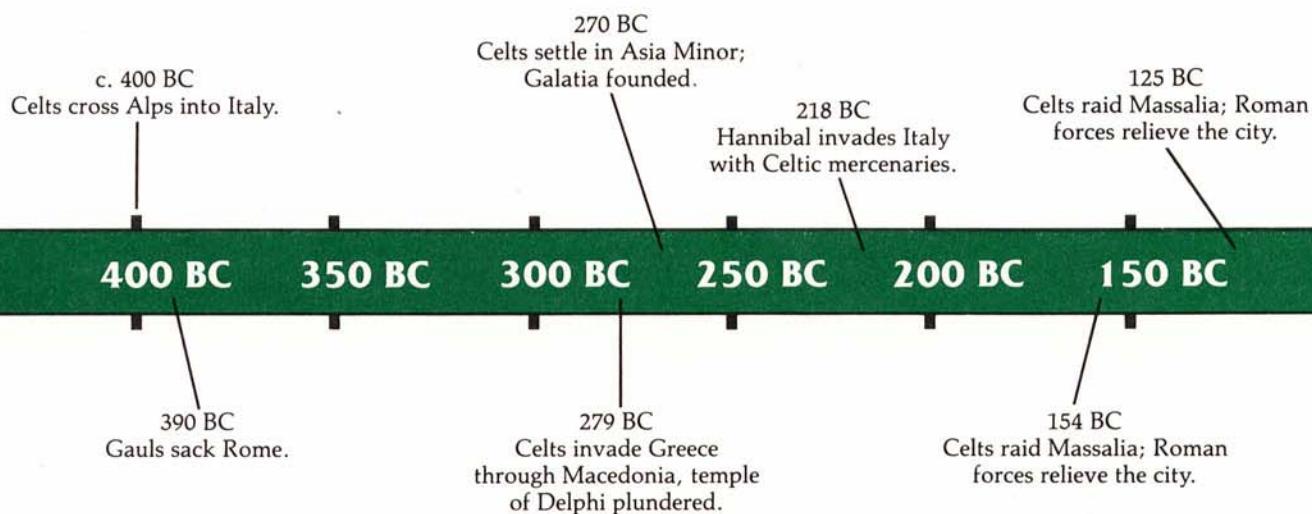
### Greece and the Celts

As the Celts expanded across Europe, they inevitably came into contact with the great Mediterranean civilizations of Greece and Rome. In 279 B.C., fifty years after a Celtic envoy told Alexander the Great that the Celtic people feared only that the sky might fall on their heads, a Celtic raiding force devastated Alexander's homeland of Macedonia in northern Greece and pushed southward into the rich Greek heartland.

The Greek city-states sent a joint force to face the Celts at the pass at Thermopylae two hundred years after the famous battle against the Persians, but after hard fighting, the Celts broke through. They sacked the temple of Apollo at Delphi, one of the greatest shrines of the Greek world, before they were forced to withdraw.

The following year, the Celts pushed west across the Bosphorus and into the Greek cities of Asia Minor—the area that is modern Turkey. After a series of battles, the King of Bythinia granted lands to the raiders. There they settled and the state of Galatia was born. These “Galatae,” as they were called, became the Galatians of the New Testament.

Not all Greek contact with the Celts was violent,



however. The Celts of the Danube traded with Greek merchants for centuries, and the Greeks even founded a trading outpost at Massalia (modern Marseilles) with the specific purpose of trading with the Celts of Gaul.

## Rome and the Celts

The Etruscans traded with the Celtic world, but the main period of Celtic expansion came just as Rome was extending its influence in Italy. The Gauls, as the Romans called them, raided extensively in Italy, sacking Rome itself in 390 B.C. According to legend, the Romans were warned of a night attack by the honking of the sacred geese at the temple of Juno, but still the city fell. The Romans were forced to pay a tribute in gold, and when they complained about the size of the weights the Gauls used to weigh the tribute out, the Gaulish leader Brennus added his sword to the scales with the words "Woe to the conquered."

Celts had crossed the Pyrenees into the Iberian peninsula around the 6th-5th centuries B.C. The Celtiberians, as this group is called, were a mixed culture resulting from the fusion of Celtic ways with the native Iberian culture. Hannibal used

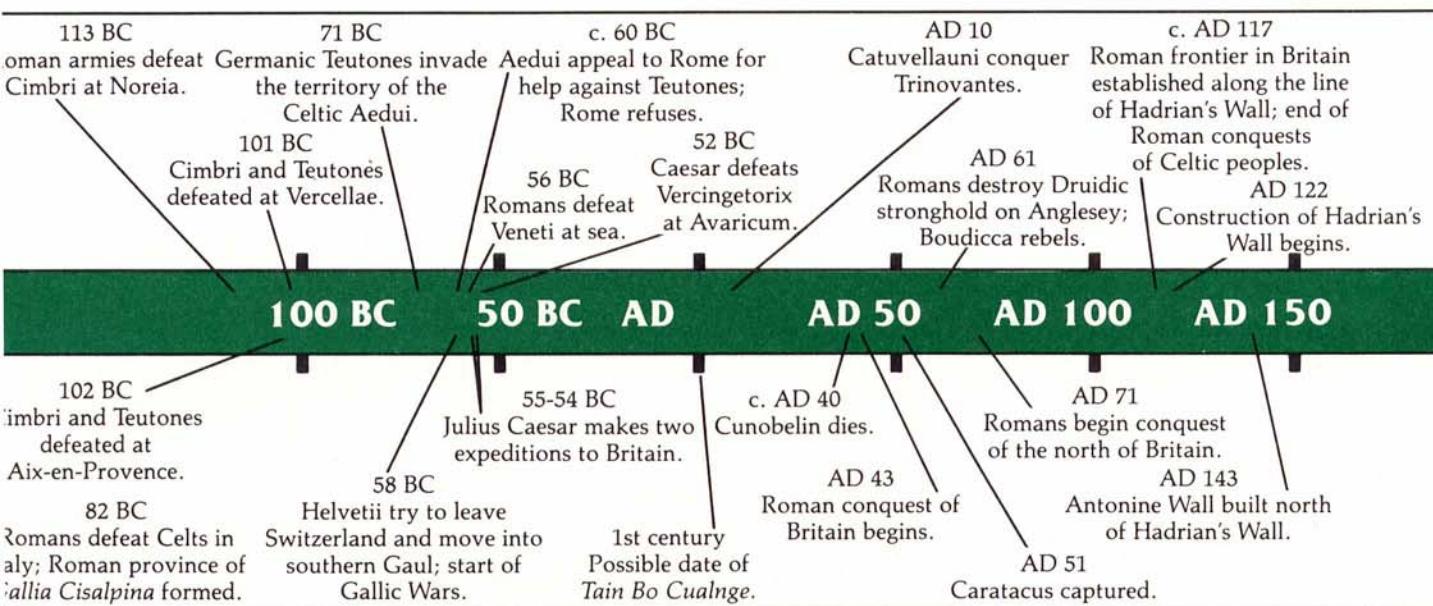
Spanish mercenaries—probably Celts—when he invaded Italy by way of the Alps in 218 B.C.

After the fall of Carthage, Rome fought a series of wars in Spain to secure its western borders. The legions were drilled for formal pitched battles but faced an enemy adept at guerilla warfare; Roman commanders—who were often retired politicians rather than career soldiers—sometimes vented their frustration by razing captured settlements and massacring the inhabitants. The Celtiberians were finally broken in 133 B.C., after a protracted siege at the hillfort of Numantia.

The next few centuries saw numerous clashes in Italy between the expanding Celts and the forces of the Roman republic. In 82 B.C., the defeated Celts of Italy were forcibly settled in the northern Italian foothills in the Roman province of Gallia Cisalpina—"Gaul on this side of the Alps."

## The Gallic Wars

Although the founding of Gallia Cisalpina (or Cisalpine Gaul as modern historians call it) stopped the Celtic advance into Italy, Celtic peoples were on the move all over Europe. More than once wandering Celtic peoples north of the Alps had displaced others,



who in their turn displaced others, and so on until Rome or one of its Italian allies was threatened. In 58 B.C., when the Helvetii (whose name lives on as an old name for Switzerland) tried to move into southern Gaul, Julius Caesar headed north to stop them. Determined to end the problem once and for all (and win a little glory for himself), Caesar undertook the conquest of Gaul, which is reported in great detail in his *Gallic Wars*.

A masterful politician, Caesar conquered the tribes of Gaul piecemeal. The Celts were always prone to disputes, and by playing on local squabbles, Caesar was able to prevent the Gauls from uniting against Rome. For a short time, a gifted leader called Vercingetorix managed to unite several tribes against Caesar, but his power was broken after the siege of Avaricum (near modern Bourges, Belgium) in 52 B.C. By the following year, the whole of Gaul was in Roman hands.

### Events in Britain

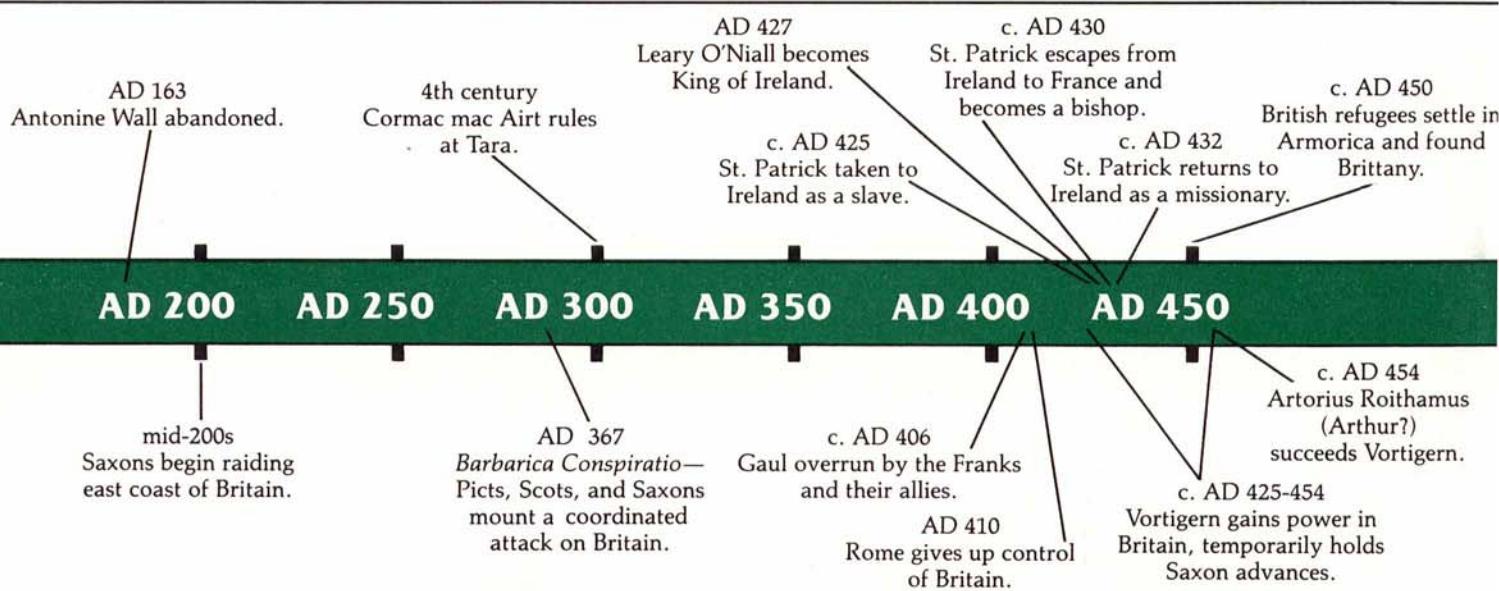
Caesar made two expeditions into Britain, in 55 and 54 B.C., but he did not try to conquer the island. Instead, he defeated the powerful and expanding Catuvellauni of Hertfordshire. Their

neighboring Celtic tribes had felt threatened by these Catuvellauni and asked for Ceaser's help in repelling them. A generation or so later, though, the Catuvellauni had a new king and began expanding again.

The Catuvellaunian king, Cunobelin (Shakespeare's Cymbeline), began overrunning tribes in Kent and encroaching on territories in Sussex, Berkshire, and Hampshire. The king of one of the threatened tribes, Tincommius, fled to Rome, demanding help under the terms of a treaty which his father had signed with Julius Caesar. Tincommius is thought to have been expelled by his brother, who may or may not have been allied with Cunobelin.

Rome had other problems at this time and help was not forthcoming. Augustus and later Tiberius were more concerned with securing the Roman frontier on the Rhine than with an island at the edge of the known world.

As Cunobelin grew older, his power passed increasingly to his three sons. One, Adminius, was pro-Roman, but the other two were not. They expelled Adminius from his stronghold, and he fled to Rome for help. The mad emperor Caligula set out to conquer Britain, but his expedition dissolved into farce on the Atlantic shore when he ordered



his troops to collect sea shells and took the shells back to Rome in triumph, claiming they were spoils from the conquest of the ocean.

Cunobelin died around A.D. 40, and his other two sons, Togodumnus and Caradoc, succeeded him jointly. They immediately started to drive west, cutting the lands of another tribe in half and installing a puppet ruler. Since Rome had failed to come to the aid of other exiled Celtic rulers, they were emboldened to complete their conquests.

## Britannia

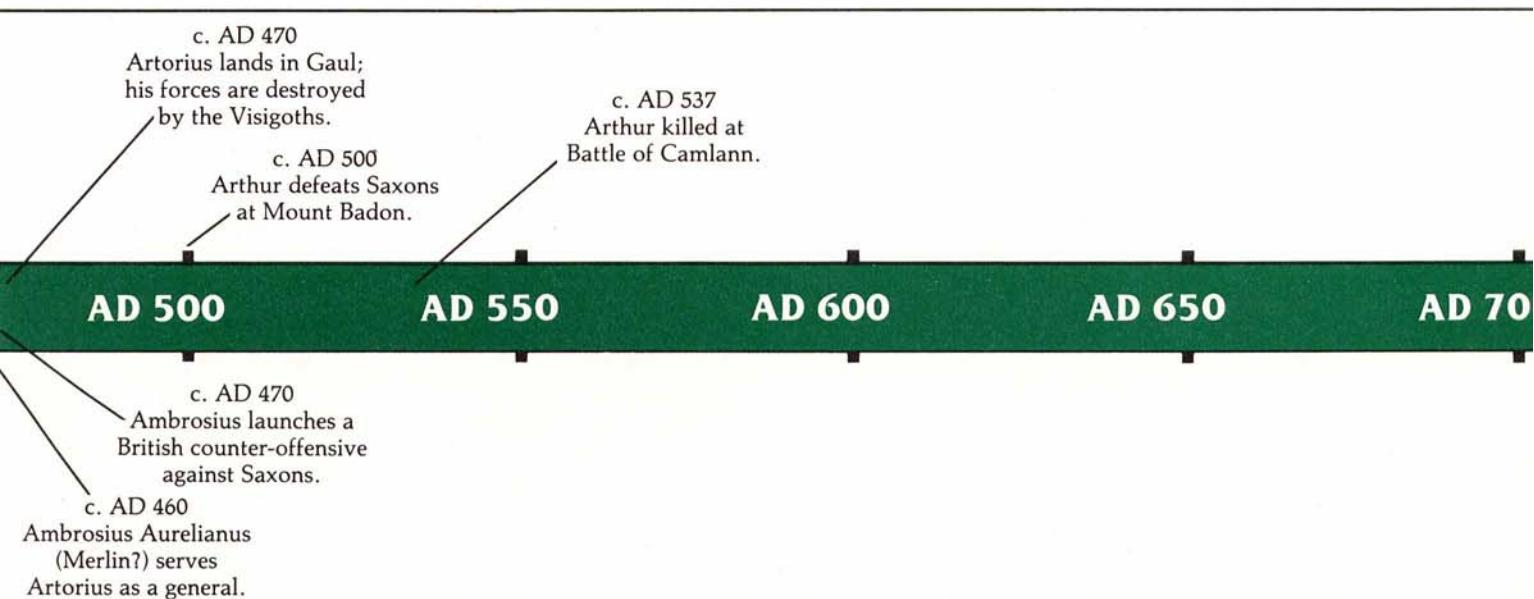
Claudius was made emperor by the army after Caligula's assassination. Regarded as something of a buffoon for his stammer and clubfoot, Claudius felt the need for a victory to please both the army and the people, and to make his reign more secure. He decided on the conquest of Britain, which had long been a refuge and support for rebels in Gaul. In addition, its internal problems had sent many deposed British rulers to Rome for help. Claudius probably also wanted to wipe out the embarrassing memory of Caligula's abortive British expedition.

Posting a permanent occupying force in Britain would also reduce the number of Roman legions in

mainland Europe—legions that had developed the habit of marching on Rome whenever they were unhappy about something. Claudius knew that an emperor who had been made by the army could be unmade by the army.

Four legions sailed from Gaul, and in a series of swift victories—both political and military—lowland Britain was soon conquered. As in Gaul a century earlier, internal strife and disunity made conquest easier. The Catuvellauni suffered several heavy defeats; Togodumnus died in battle and Caradoc was forced to flee. He traveled secretly around Britain trying to gain support, but was betrayed by a queen of a neighboring tribe, who wanted Rome's support in a dispute with her husband.

The highland regions of Britain offered more resistance, and in many ways they were never conquered. A new governor, Suetonius Paulinus, was brought in for a Welsh campaign. He had served in Afghanistan and was regarded as an expert in mountain warfare. Constantly harried by native guerilla tactics, the Romans finally crossed Wales and mounted an attack on the island of Anglesey. This was an important strategic target; as well as having the best agricultural land in Wales, it was also a druidical power base. Paulinus hoped to



strike at the supplies and morale of the Welsh tribes simultaneously.

### Boudicca

Paulinus suddenly found revolt breaking out behind him. The Iceni rose almost as soon as he attacked Anglesey. Their queen, Boudicca (or Boadicea), had been ill-treated by Roman officials who had claimed the tribal lands on her husband's death. Another tribe joined the revolt, unhappy because Rome had planted a colony at their capital instead of returning it to them after their liberation from the Catuvellauni. The Celtic cities of Camulodunum, Verulamium, and Londinium (London) were sacked before Paulinus could return from Wales. The rebellion was eventually put down, but the Roman advance was temporarily halted as Rome applied itself to consolidating its hold on the south and east of Britain.

### Agricola

It was almost ten years before Rome advanced the frontier. Under the governor Agricola, the northern frontier moved up to the line where Hadrian's Wall would later stand and was pinned

down by a chain of forts. Agricola's biography (written by his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus) states that he reached the farthest ends of the island and received the submission of every British chief. This may be an exaggeration, but he is known to have pushed well into Scotland.

Agricola's northern campaigns mark the last significant Roman advances in Britain. Peace was enforced, progressively Romanizing the province.

## The End of Roman Britain

### The Barbarian Conspiracy

Pressure from raiding came and went along the northern border for the whole duration of the Roman occupation of Britain. As the Roman Empire slowly began to disintegrate through the third and fourth centuries, Hadrian's Wall was overrun more than once. It was an effective frontier when fully manned, but whenever an ambitious governor stripped Britain of troops to support his claim to the throne, the Picts and Scots seized the moment.

The worst breakout came in A.D. 367 when Picts, Scots, and Saxons mounted a coordinated attack on the northern frontier of Britain, which became



AD 685  
King Ecgfrith of Northumbria killed in battle against southern Picts.

**AD 750**

**AD 800**

AD 852  
Cyngen, the last native king of Powys, dies.

**AD 850**

**AD 900**

known as "barbarica conspiratio"—the barbarian conspiracy. Northern Britain was overrun as far south as York; one of the two highest ranking military officers in the province died in action, and the other was trapped in the besieged fortress-city. It was two years before order was restored.

### The End Comes

In the years that followed, Britain was repeatedly stripped of troops by would-be emperors, and various Roman officials—including the emperor Constantine the Great—were obliged to restore order. Finally, in A.D. 410, the Britons sent an appeal to the emperor Honorius for help against the incoming Saxons and received only a letter instructing them to look to their own defense. Rome had formally relinquished Britannia.

### Caledonia

Caledonia is the name the Romans gave to the area north of their British frontier, modern Scotland and parts of the English counties of Cumbria and Northumberland. The tribes there remained free, and the threat of raiding required a constant Roman military presence on the frontier. This

eventually led to the building of the vast fortification system known as Hadrian's Wall.

The Selgovae, an unconquered tribe occupying southeastern Scotland, were a constant problem. The dispute in the royal family of the neighboring Brigantes has already been mentioned; when Rome conquered the Brigantes, the anti-Roman faction (including the king) looked to the Selgovae for support, and one of the reasons behind Agricola's northern campaigns was to stop the constant stream of calls for help from the pro-Roman faction.

### The Picts

The Picts are an enigmatic people. Some scholars believe they were a Celtic tribe, while others think they were of older stock. Roman writers always distinguish them from the Celts of Scotland, marveling at their ferocity and their barbarous habit of painting or tattooing themselves.

Even the name "Picts" does not help. It is derived from the Latin word *picti*, which simply means "painted"—a reference to their war paint or tattoos. The name by which the Picts called themselves is lost. Physical descriptions of the Picts make them a small, wiry, sallow-skinned people;



not at all like the Gauls, whose pale skin, height, and build impressed Roman writers.

Scottish folklore speaks of "pechs." Over the centuries they have become a magical, pixie-like race, but many scholars believe that this is a folk-memory of the Picts, which indicates that they were regarded by the Celts of Scotland as a separate race and not just a separate tribe. Coupled with the reported physical differences, it does seem that the Picts might have been the last remnants of Britain's pre-Celtic population, but nothing is certain.

### Eriu

Irish tradition, first written down in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D., tells of successive waves of invaders. The *Lebor Gabala Eirann* (*Book of the Invasions of Ireland*) is one of two key surviving works of ancient Irish literature.

After the Great Flood (possibly added by the Christian monks who first wrote this tradition down) came a sorceress named Cessair, with a group of female followers. Some scholars link her with the enchantress Circe from Homer's *Odyssey*.

The next invaders were Greeks, led by a prince named Partholon; they were wiped out by a plague. After them came the people of Nemed—the name means "sacred," and these people may have been early Celts. They were followed by the Firbolg, who may have been Belgae—members of an alliance of tribes which fought Julius Caesar and expanded across southern Britain in the years immediately before the Roman conquest.

After the Firbolg came the Tuatha De Danann, "the tribe of the goddess Danu." This was a race of powerful magicians and noble warriors embodying every Celtic virtue. Their rule was a golden age, and when they were forced out by the Sons of Mil Espaine (possibly Celiberians), they withdrew to the magical land of Tir Nan Og (see Chapter 8). Some of them became gods; others who remained became the elflike Sidhe (see Chapter 5).

Ireland never fell to Rome. Visible from Roman Britain on a clear day, its existence had been known to the Mediterranean world since the third century B.C. Roman troops had threatened mutiny more than once when ordered to embark for Britain, which was thought to be near the edge of the world; Ireland was even closer. To the Romans, it was a mysterious place, wreathed in legend.

Legends of plentiful gold in Ireland were similar to the 16th-century Spanish rumors of mythic El-

dorado. One story told of a "bridge of sand"—perhaps a causeway, traversable at the lowest tide—from Wales to Ireland. According to some unsubstantiated reports, Roman troops searched for it, but it was never found.

Throughout the Roman period, the western coasts of Britain were subject to raids by Irish pirates, both for loot and for slaves. It was in one such raid that a Christian farm boy named Patrick was taken from Wales. He played a key role in the conversion of Ireland to Christianity and, according to legend, he drove all the snakes from the island.

### The Golden Age

There is almost no historical record for Ireland until the coming of Christianity. However, there is a large body of traditional stories first written down by Christian monks in the 7th-8th centuries A.D. These are epic tales, comparable to Homer's works and the Norse sagas. Most impressive is the cycle of stories revolving around the Ulster hero Cu Chulainn, sometimes called the Irish Achilles.

These stories have grown in the telling and are better treated as legend than history. However, they shed light on conditions in Ireland during the centuries around the birth of Christ. The greatest of the Irish epics, the *Tain Bo Cuailnge* ("The Cattle-Raid of Cooley"), tells the story of a force of warriors from Ulster who mount a cattle-raid against their traditional enemies of Connacht.

Ireland was traditionally divided into five kingdoms: Ulster in the north, Connacht in the west, Meath in the east, Leinster in the southeast and Munster in the southwest. Meath was ruled by Niall of the Nine Hostages in the 5th century A.D. He and his sons conquered a large part of Ulster, and St. Patrick was received by Niall's son Leary as he set about converting Ireland to Christianity.

Each of the five kingdoms had its own king, but from time to time a strong ruler like Niall and his sons would extend his control over neighboring kingdoms; the titles "High King" and "King of All Ireland" were used more often in boast than in reflection of fact.

### The Celtic Twilight

In Gaul and Britain, Roman rule effectively ended traditional Celtic society, although Celtic remained the language of ordinary people, and the way of life in the countryside changed little apart



from the ruthlessly imposed "Roman peace."

This peace began to crumble through the 4th century A.D., as Germanic peoples began to press on the frontiers. The Franks and Burgundians pushed into Gaul, while the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes sailed from northern Germany and southern Denmark for the eastern coast of Britain. At first they merely raided but later conquered and settled. Sensing Roman weakness, Picts and Scots increased their raiding in the north and west of Britain.

Roman forces were stretched to the limit. Other Germanic tribes—most notably the Goths and Vandals—pressed on the Empire's northern frontier, and the Ostrogoths even took Rome. When Rome relinquished Britain in A.D. 410, the Britons had to look to their own defense.

### Vortigern

Vortigern seems to have been a title rather than a personal name—it translates from Celtic as "High King." Some scholars believe that Vortigern was a Celtic chieftain, possibly from Wales, who tried to unite the British against the Saxons. It has been suggested that Vortigern was the legendary Uther Pendragon, father of Arthur.

Vortigern scored some victories against the Saxons, but his downfall came when he was no longer able to keep paying the Anglo-Saxon mercenaries he had employed.

### Arthur

One of the greatest figures in British legend, Arthur is thought by some scholars to have been a Romano-British chieftain, Artorius Riothamus, who succeeded Vortigern and again tried to unite the British.

He was aided by an able general named Ambrosius Aurelianus who is equated by some with Merlin. After considerable success against the Saxons, Artorius was offered an alliance by the Roman emperor Anthemius. Around A.D. 470, Artorius took a British force to Gaul, leaving Ambrosius in command of Britain. He was unable to meet the Roman forces and was routed by the Visigoths. History last records him fleeing toward the city of Avallon in Burgundy and vanishing.

### Saxon Settlement

Like the Romans before them, the Saxons advanced quickly in the lowlands of Britain, and

the ethnically Celtic Britons found themselves pushed north and west into Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall, where they survive to this day.

### And On . . .

The history of the Celtic peoples did not end with Roman conquest, Saxon settlement, or conversion to Christianity. It simply entered another phase. To this day, the inhabitants of many parts of northwestern Europe regard themselves as Celtic and speak Celtic languages. Although their history and culture pass beyond the scope of this book, they have continued to play a vital part in the history of Europe—and the history of America.

### The Timeline

The timeline given in this chapter covers specific events in the history of the Celts and surrounding lands. These events were important to Celtic history and can be used as background for campaigns and adventures. For example, any of the dates for Celtic invasions of Italy can be turned into a campaign in which the characters participate. The cattle raid described in the *Tain Bo Cuailgne* could involve the player characters on one or both sides.

The highlighted sections of the timeline indicate periods of Celtic history which are particularly suitable for a campaign setting. The last few centuries before Christ, for example, were a time of contact—both friendly and otherwise—with Mediterranean cultures, except in Ireland. That was an age of hero-tales comparable to Homer's Greece. By contrast, the 1st-3rd centuries A.D. were comparatively quiet, for much of the Celtic world was under Roman domination and less suited to Celtic adventures.

### Suggested Reading

These few pages cannot hope to do more than provide an outline of Celtic history and myth. Listed here are a few of the many titles available. Not all are still in print, but may be found in libraries and stores handling used books.

Arrowsmith, Nancy and Moore, George; *A Field Guide to the Little People* (Wallaby). Covers creatures from the whole of Europe, while Briggs (below) concentrates on Britain and Ireland.

Briggs, Katharine; *A Dictionary of Fairies* (Penguin). Although faerie lore is a medieval phenome-



non, it has its roots in Celtic folk-belief, and it is a good source for supernatural creatures.

Chadwick, Nora; *The Celts* (Penguin). A good introduction to the history and culture of the Celts.

*The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*. One of the best coffee-table mythology books around.

Mac Niocail, Gearoid; *Ireland Before the Vikings* (Gill & Macmillan). A concise and accessible history. The chapter on kingship is very valuable.

Matthews, John and Stewart, Bob; *Celtic Battle Heroes* (Firebird Books). A lavishly illustrated study of four great Celtic heroes—Cu Chulainn, Boudicca, Fionn Mac Cumhail and Macbeth.

Newark, Tim; *Celtic Warriors, 400 B.C.—A.D. 1600* (Blandford). An illustrated history of the Celts from their first contact with Mediterranean peoples to the English campaigns in Scotland and Ireland. The color illustrations are superb.

Piggott, Stuart; *The Druids* (Pelican). A study of the Druids, from Celtic fact to 19th-century fantasy.

The following books reflect the contemporary Mediterranean view of the Celts and neighboring cultures. All are available in English translations.

Julius Caesar; *The Gallic Wars*. A not unbiased account of Rome's conquest of Gaul, with asides on Gaulish culture, Britain, and Germany.

Strabo; *Geography*. A Roman view of the world, describing many lands and peoples. One of the main classical sources for the Celtic world.

Tacitus; *Agricola*. The biography of the Roman governor who conquered northern Britain. Written by his son-in-law, it is not unbiased.

The following books are examples of Celtic literature written down in the early Christian period. All are translated into English and should not be too difficult to obtain.

*The Tain*, trans. by Thomas Kinsella (Oxford University Press). Some call this the ultimate Celtic saga, and it has been compared to Homer's *Iliad*. An important source for Irish campaigns, it is highly recommended for any Celtic campaign.

Fitzpatrick, Jim; *The Book of Conquests* (Paper Tiger). *The Book of Conquests* (or *The Book of Invasions*) is the second great work of Irish literature, telling the history of Ireland as it was settled by successive waves of invaders. The artwork in this book is of particular interest.

*The Mabinogion*, various translations available.

### Names

Many place-names in Europe are of Celtic origin, often drawn from the name of the local Celtic tribe. Here are a few examples:

Paris	Parisi
Trier	Treveri
Chartres	Carnuti
Belgium	Belgae
Nantes	Namnetes
Aquitaine	Aquitani
Bohemia	Boii
Rennes	Redones
Vannes	Venetes
Helvetia (Switzerland)	Helvetii
Kent	Cantii or Canticai
Dorchester	Durotriges

A mixture of history and fantasy, this Welsh classic includes some of the earliest tales of King Arthur.

*A Celtic Miscellany*, trans. Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson (Penguin Classics). A mixture of Celtic literature from sagas to poetry.

Gerald of Wales; *The History and Topography of Ireland*. Written by a 12th-century churchman, this description of Ireland is a mixture of history, myth, superstition, and prejudice. It is recommended as a source for magical places and events.

Gerald of Wales; *The Journey through Wales*. A description of Wales shortly after its conquest by England. Invaluable for fleshing out campaigns.

Gerald of Wales; *The Description of Wales*. In many ways a companion volume to *The History and Topography of Ireland* above, covering the geography, history and customs of Wales as seen from the 12th century.

Geoffrey of Monmouth; *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Another 12th-century mixture of history, myth, and fantasy, this work covers the mainland of Britain from pre-Roman times up to the time of King Arthur.

Other worthwhile sources include the *Asterix* series of comic books, by Goscinny, Uderzo, and others. Despite their lightheartedness they are well grounded in the history of Roman Gaul and sometimes appear on university reading lists! They have been translated into English as well as many other languages. In addition, many fantasy novels are either based on Celtic lore or try to capture a Celtic atmosphere; their quality is as uneven as that of other kinds of fantasy novels. No reviews or recommendations are offered here; it is a matter of personal taste.



# Of Characters and Combat

## First Impressions

The Celts are many things to many people, and at the first mention of a Celtic campaign, different people will probably react in different ways.

Some may start talking about Druids, Romans, blue body-paint and—if they are familiar with a certain French comic-book character—Potions of Giant Strength. Others may think about leprechauns and hidden caches of gold. Still others may wonder whether their characters will get to meet King Arthur and Merlin. And others may start talking about strange-sounding things such as head-taking and warp-frenzy.

As different as all these conceptions might sound, they are all compatible with a historical fantasy role-playing campaign set in the Celtic world. The Celtic culture is a rich one, as full of color and contrast as any other in the world.

The information in this chapter is divided into two sections. The first part presents information on old and new character races and classes. The second has rules for creating special background information pertinent to a Celtic campaign.

## Races in a Celtic Campaign

The historical fantasy world of the Celts was a very different place from a standard fantasy realm. While the Celts had no doubt that many nonhuman races existed, these creatures did not coexist with them in the same way that humans, elves, dwarves, and the like live together in many fantasy settings. The Celtic world was mainly a human world, with monsters and nonhuman races lurking in the shadows between reality and myth.

Therefore, the Celtic world offers players a smaller choice of character races than they might be used to. The vast majority of characters will be human, although some may have mixed human and nonhuman blood. A rare character may carry in his veins a trace of the monstrous Fomorians, or the powerful but unpredictable Sidhe. This can be a curse as much as a blessing. Such men are regarded askance at the very least—more often they are feared and distrusted.

### Humans

The bulk of characters encountered in a Celtic campaign are human. PCs of other races may appear with the DM's approval, and some notes on wholly-nonhuman PCs are given beginning on

p. 45. But in the whole of surviving Celtic tradition, the heroes are always human.

Even so, this does not mean that all characters are equal—far from it. In Celtic tradition, a hero is born with certain gifts that make him (or her) stand out from the crowd. Sometimes these birth-gifts are an advantage, and sometimes they can bring about the character's ultimate doom. Frequently they can be both a blessing and a curse in the same story.

Some gifts come from fate, and some from the deeds of one's ancestors. A father can do little to ensure that his children are born lucky, but he can endow them with some of the wealth and position that he himself has earned. Land, cattle, wealth, and status can all be inherited—and so can enemies and blood-feuds. However, burdens that spring from mortal causes are always more easily overcome than difficulties which come from blind fate or divine action.

A human character may check for a birth-gift at the time of character generation. This is done by rolling 1d20 and consulting Table 1: Character Gifts. In keeping with the spirit of the Celtic hero-tales, not all the results are good, and some of them can be very bad indeed. The doomed hero is as popular a character in Celtic stories as he is in Greek legend or modern fantasy.

A player who does not want to make this check is under no compulsion to do so; it is entirely optional. Once the result is found, of course, the player must abide by it, and a player who has chosen not to check for a gift at character generation may not do so later. Only one check is allowed per character.

**Table 1: Character Gifts**

**Die Roll Gift**

1	Bad Luck
2	Blood-Feud
3	Kinless
4	Ugly
5	Geas
6-12	No Gift
13	Courage
14	Good Luck
15	Handsome
16	Status
17	Mixed Blood
18	Riastarhae
19	Seer
20	Magical Affinity



## Explanation of Character Gifts

**1. Bad Luck.** The character is born unlucky. Neither the character nor the gods can change this fact. This does not mean that the character cannot achieve great things and be remembered in song and story to the end of time. It does mean, however, that the character will travel a harder road than most, and face greater dangers.

In game terms, bad luck causes the character to suffer a  $-1$  penalty on all die rolls made with a single type of die. The player may choose which type of die is affected—it may be a d6, d8, d10, or d20. The penalty comes into effect any time the character attempts an action using the chosen die, or any time the DM uses that type of die to determine some random event that affects only the unlucky character. It does not apply to THAC0 and damage rolls made by others when attacking the unlucky character, but it does apply to the character's own attacks.

For example, Dave has chosen the d10 as the die for his unlucky character, Cormac mac Eogan. One night, Cormac and his companions are attacked by Fomorians. The  $-1$  penalty does not apply to rolls for the group's surprise or initiative, since the roll does not only affect Cormac; if he had been alone, though, the penalty would have applied.

In all cases, the  $-1$  modifier is considered to be a penalty to the unlucky character. If a  $-1$  modifier would be to the character's advantage, the modifier is changed to  $+1$ . In the example above,  $+1$  is added to Cormac's initiative, since this is the worse result for him. Even with bad luck, a die roll can never be modified to below 1.

**2. Blood-Feud.** The character's family is currently involved in a blood-feud with an NPC family. The DM should provide the name of the enemy family and some background to the feud. A feud might start with an accidental death in a brawl, a dispute over the ownership of some cattle, a broken promise, or any number of other things.

All encounters with members of the enemy family are automatically hostile, although the enemy may not immediately attack. In addition, the NPC family may mount raids and other attacks on the PC's family and their property. A blood-feud can only be ended if both sides meet and agree to a settlement, or if one side is completely wiped out.

**3. Kinless.** In ancient Ireland, a man without kin was said to be "headless." The role of kindred in Celtic society is covered in Chapter 7; in this turbu-

lent culture they were a vital protection.

A kinless character has no one to protect him, stand witness for him, or avenge wrongs done to him; he must look to his own resources for all these things. This means that NPCs are likely to show less respect for the character, and feel less compunction about insulting, abusing, and even attacking him, since they know that they will not be risking a feud with the character's family.

Kinless men are regarded with fear and distrust by the rest of society, since they have no families to hold them back and redress any wrongs they may do. Furthermore, since they have had to survive without the protection of their families, others expect them to be strong, wild, bitter, and unpredictable. The best comparison is with Old West gunfighters or modern outlaw bikers: regardless of the facts, society at large will always be prejudiced against them. In game terms, NPC reactions to a character who is known to be kinless may never be better than Cautious. Results of Friendly and Indifferent are treated as Cautious. All other dice rolls involving dealings with human NPCs are made with a  $-1$  penalty.

**4. Ugly.** The character is extremely ugly or disfigured in some way. The character suffers a  $-2$  penalty to Charisma and may gain an uncomplimentary nickname. The player may choose the precise nature of the ugliness or disfigurement, subject to the DM's approval.

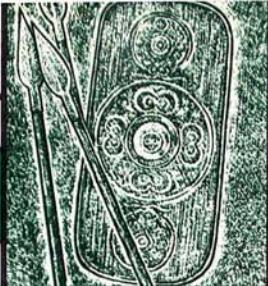
**5. Geas.** More detailed notes on gessae are given in Chapter 7. The character is born with some magical prohibition or compulsion, and will suffer terribly bad luck if this is ever violated. The nature of a geas is decided by the DM, but the character may find out about it by divination or by consulting a seer. If the character has enemies, they will try to discover the nature of the geas and manipulate situations so that the character is forced to break it.

A character who breaks a geas is cursed forever, and suffers the effects of Bad Luck above, but more prominently, penalties are  $-2$  instead of  $-1$  and apply to all dice.

### 6-12. No Gift.

**13. Courage.** The character is noted for fearlessness, and gains a  $+1$  bonus on all saving throws vs. fear-based attacks.

**14. Good Luck.** The character is born lucky, and gains  $+1$  to all rolls with a single type of die: d6, d8, d10, or d20. As with Bad Luck above, the modifier is applied only to rolls affecting the character



specifically, and not to rolls affecting a group of which the lucky character is a member.

**15. Handsome.** The character is extremely good-looking (beautiful in the case of female characters), and gains +1 to Charisma.

**16. Status.** Chapter 7 explains Celtic social structure and status. The player may choose for the character to be born into the *aes dana* or nobility.

**17. Mixed Blood.** The character has a trace of Sidhe or Fomorian blood. Roll 1d12 and refer to the **Mixed Blood Table** below to determine what this means for the character.

**Table 2: Mixed Blood Table**

**Die Roll Result**

1	Part Sidhe, Charisma +2
2	Part Sidhe, +1 to saving throws vs. spells
3	Part Sidhe, +50% to base maximum age
4	Part Sidhe, infravision 60 ft.
5	Part Sidhe, Intelligence +2
6	Part Sidhe, Dexterity +2
7	Part Sidhe, may be multi-class, adding Mage to any other class except Druid, regardless of rules which normally prohibit this
8	Part Fomorian, Strength +2
9	Part Fomorian, Constitution +2
10	Part Fomorian, +1 to saving throws vs. poison
11	Part Fomorian, +25% to base height and weight
12	Part Fomorian, AC 8 unarmored

**18. Riastarthaе.** The character is touched with riastarthaе, the warp-frenzy, and has the ability to go berserk in battle. Whenever wounded in battle, faced by an unequal fight, or otherwise enraged (DM's discretion), the character can attempt a saving throw vs. death magic. If the save is successful, the character goes berserk. If the save is failed, the character can try again on the next round, for up to ten consecutive rounds. At the end of the tenth round, the character automatically succeeds. The berserk state confers the following advantages and disadvantages:

The character's Strength increases by 2 points, to a maximum of 19. For Strength over 18, percentile strengths increase by one category for every extra point. The character gains all appropriate bonuses to THAC0, damage, weight allowance,

**Riastarthaе**

The warp-frenzy seized Cu Chulainn and made him into a monster, hideous and shapeless, like nothing ever seen. His legs and joints—every knuckle and bend and organ from head to foot—shook like a tree in a flood or a reed in a river. His body twisted terribly inside his skin, so that his feet, shins, and knees turned back and his heels and calves turned to the front. His knotted calf muscles came to the front of his shins, each knot the size of a warrior's fist. . . .

His face and features became a red dish. He sucked one eye so deep into his face that a heron could not have dug it out with its beak. The other eye bulged out onto his cheek. His mouth distorted awfully . . . it seemed that each hair was hammered into his head, they stood up so stiffly. A fire-speck seemed to be at the tip of each hair. One eye was squeezed narrower than the eye of a needle; the other was wider than the top of a goblet. He bared his jaws from ear to ear, peeling back his lips from his teeth until his gullet could be seen.

(To calm Cu Chulainn from the warp-fury, his allies) thrust him into a vat of cold water. The vat burst about him. Then he was plunged into a second vat, and the water boiled with fist-sized bubbles. Finally he was thrust into a third vat, and the water became only lukewarm.

—from the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*

etc. The character instantly gains 2 additional hit points per level. The hit points gained do not heal existing wounds; they are simply added to the character's current total. These additional hit points can cause the character's total to exceed the normal maximum the character is allowed.

The character's base AC improves by 1 per level, to a maximum of AC0. This adjustment is made to the character's normal unarmored rating, and is combined with the normal modifiers for Dexterity, armor, shields, magical items, spells, and so on.

Once a character goes berserk, he must enter melee combat with an enemy. Though the character can choose his opponents, he may not hang back from battle. A character who does not engage in melee combat within two rounds of becoming berserk must attack the nearest other character—friend or foe. Once in combat, the character cannot change opponents until the current opponent is either slain or flees and cannot be followed.



A berserk character may not voluntarily retreat from melee combat and cannot be routed or forced to retreat.

A character may try to end the berserk fury by making a saving throw vs. spell. If the character is physically restrained (i.e., firmly grappled!) by friends, immobilized by some other means, or doused in cold water, there is a +2 bonus to the saving throw. Cu Chulainn reputedly needed to be doused with three vats of cold water before his riastarthaе could be ended.

When the berserk frenzy leaves a character, he must make another saving throw vs. death magic. If the roll is failed, the character loses 5 points of Strength (in addition to the 2 points/level granted temporarily by the berserk state). The lost Strength is recovered at the rate of 1 point per turn of complete rest. No Strength is recovered until the character can rest completely, and the character may not go berserk again until Strength has returned to its normal level.

**19. Seer.** The character has the gift of prophecy, which can be both a boon and a curse. Once per day the character may attempt a prediction as though using a divination spell—whether or not the character is normally able to cast spells. If the

character is not normally able to cast spells, the chance of a successful prediction never exceeds 60%. This gift is a prerequisite for the manteis character class (see p. 22).

**20. Magical Affinity.** The character was born with an aptitude for magic, and may become a multi-classed character, adding Mage to any chosen character class except Druid, regardless of any rules which would normally prohibit this.

## Character Classes

As with character races, not all the character classes detailed in the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* are appropriate for a Celtic campaign, and some are modified. Since a campaign set in the Celtic world is different from a standard AD&D campaign, some additions and exclusions are necessary to create the appropriate mood.

### Classes from the *Player's Handbook*

Not all the standard character classes of the AD&D game are available in a "pure" Celtic campaign, and other classes may have special restrictions. These changes and restrictions apply only to



campaigns set in the historical fantasy world of the Celts, and do not necessarily apply to campaigns set in a "standard" fantasy world such as the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign. It is possible to have "disallowed" character classes in a campaign, but only if special considerations are met. For example, a priest player character could join a heroic Irish campaign as a Christian missionary from Britain.

The following chart lists which character classes are available to Celtic characters and which are not.

**Table 3: Character Classes**

Classes Allowed	Classes Not Allowed
Fighter	Paladin
Ranger	Cleric
Specialist Mage	Wizard
Druid*	
Bard*	
Thief	

\* These character classes are radically changed from the *Player's Handbook*.

### Warriors

In a historical Celtic setting, warriors are the most common character class. The heroes of Celtic literature were mighty warriors, skilled in the use of sword, spear, and other weapons.

In a Celtic campaign, the warrior group includes fighters and rangers. Paladins are not appropriate to a Celtic setting and should not be used without special considerations. Descriptions of how each warrior class fits into the campaign are given here, along with any pertinent changes.

### Fighters

Of all the warrior classes, fighters are the most easily adapted to a Celtic campaign. Celtic warriors were famed for their fighting spirit and skills. Any player character with appropriate scores may choose to be a Celtic fighter.

All fighters must be initially proficient with either the long sword or the spear. Additional weapon proficiencies may be chosen as the player prefers, subject to the availability of particular weapons in the Celtic setting. Upon attaining 9th level, the Celtic fighter can attract a body of warriors. However, instead of using the tables in the *Player's Handbook*, the number and types of followers attracted are listed below.

To use the tables, roll once to determine the lieu-

tenant, once for the regular followers, and once to determine the special bodyguards

**Table 4: Celtic Followers**

**Die Roll Leader Type**

01-45	5th level fighter, splint mail, shield, sword +1.
46-75	6th level fighter, shield, spear, scale mail +1, sword +1.
76-95	6th level ranger, spear, chain mail +2, shield +1, sword +2.
96-99	7th-level fighter, chain mail +1, cloak of protection +2, sword of wounding.
00	DM's option.

All leader types have a chariot, charioteer (0-level fighter with leather armor, sword, and dagger), and one roll on the **Character Gifts Table** (p 15).

**Die Roll Troops/Followers (all level 0)**

01-25	60 infantry, leather, shield, spear, dagger
26-50	50 infantry, leather, shield, 2 spears, sword, dagger; 20 infantry, sling, spear, dagger.
51-75	40 infantry, ring mail, shield, sword, dagger; 20 infantry, leather, shield, 2 spears, sword, dagger; 20 infantry, sling, spear, dagger.
76-95	30 infantry, splint mail, shield, spear, sword, dagger; 20 infantry, ring mail, shield, sword, dagger; 30 infantry, leather, shield, 2 spears, sword, dagger; 20 infantry, sling, spear, dagger.
96-00	DM's option, 100 men total.

**Die Roll Elite Bodyguard Units**

01-30	20 2nd-level fighters with studded leather, shield, and spear.
31-60	20 3rd-level fighters with ring mail, shield, and sword.
61-90	10 4th-level fighters with splint mail, shield, 2 spears, and sword.
91-99	10 4th-level rangers with chain mail, shield, sling, and sword.
00	DM's option.

### Paladins

Although the Celts certainly believed in the virtues of bravery, honesty and integrity, the paladin is not normally found in the Celtic world. For most of its history, Celtic society lacked the specific rela-



tionship between religious fervor and martial prowess upon which the paladin is based. Because of this, Celtic characters may only be paladins in a post-Roman campaign set in Britain or France.

However, paladins can exist in the game in other campaigns, albeit under exceptionally rare circumstances. Paladins can normally only come from foreign lands, and can only rarely be of Celtic birth. Typically, a paladin would be a particularly devout Roman or Roman provincial, like the knights of King Arthur in the earlier stories. The romantic-chivalric Arthurian milieu is a different campaign setting, and does not belong in this book. Such a character will encounter difficulties and prejudices when dealing with pagan Celts. The following notes assume that the campaign is not set in a Christian period.

**Language.** The paladin cannot choose any Celtic language as his native tongue. Instead, his first language must be the tongue and dialect of his homeland. While the character can learn one or more Celtic languages, his speech will always be marked, to a greater or lesser degree, by a noticeable foreign accent.

**Religion.** The Celtic world was pagan for most of its history. Britain and Gaul became nominally Christian after the Emperor Constantine the Great made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in A.D. 312, and the Galatians of Asia Minor were exposed to Christianity shortly after the time of Christ. Ireland and Scotland were converted a couple of centuries after Britain and Gaul. In other times and places, the Celts were pagan, although they were seldom fanatical. A paladin may have difficulty finding a church or followers of his religion under such circumstances.

**Land and Property.** It was very difficult for a foreigner to hold land in the Celtic world, except by conquest. Even then, the conqueror could look forward to constant uprisings, rebellions, and counterattacks. As well, a foreigner had no legal rights under Celtic law.

### Rangers

The Celts were mainly a rural people, freeborn farmers and hunters. Because of this, the ranger is a very appropriate character class for a Celtic setting. The mixture of fighting ability and mystical power possessed by the ranger is very much in keeping with the tradition of Celtic heroes.

The ranger in a Celtic campaign is only slightly altered from the description in the *Player's Hand-*

book. The changes are as follows:

**Species Enemy.** A ranger may choose a species enemy from among the following: Sidhe, firbolg, fomorians, and hags.

**Followers.** Instead of using Table 19: Ranger's Followers in the *Player's Handbook*, rangers should determine their followers in the same way as a Celtic fighter. Note, however, that all fighters generated have a 50% chance of being rangers instead. Their equipment is unchanged, and they have the same species enemy as their leader.

**Treasure.** Excess treasure (over and above the amount the ranger can carry) may be donated to the ranger's tribe or kin-group.

### Wizards

Although the word of Celtic myth and saga is full of magic and wondrous events, the style of magic is seldom like that found in the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. The Celts operated by a different understanding of magic. Supernatural agencies and ogham carvings played an important part, and while the stereotypical robed wizard was seldom seen, some characters had a magical proficiency as a result of nonhuman blood or a birth-gift. Organized colleges of magic, guilds, magical supply shops and other conventions sometimes assumed to exist in a standard AD&D campaign had no place in the world of the Celts.

Likewise, scrolls, spellbooks, and other such written material were not native to the Celtic world, although ogham was sometimes used to make magic in a similar way to Norse runes. On the whole, though, the Celts avoided writing, believing that the habit of recording things on paper not only weakened the memory, but also dishonored the things that were written by allowing them to fade from mind.

A few wizards did exist in the Celtic world—one of them was the "prototype" form of the legendary Merlin. More often than not, the wizards in Celtic stories were evil NPCs like Morgan la Fay in Arthurian myth. Single-class wizards and specialist mages should automatically suffer a -2 on encounter reactions with those aware of the character's reputation.

For DMs seeking an "authentic" fantasy campaign, it is recommended that PC wizards be kept to a minimum. Necromancy and Conjuration/Summoning magics are so rare as to be practically unknown in the Celtic world, and spells of these schools are not normally available to Celtic char-



acters, unless they travel far to learn them—to the eastern Mediterranean, for instance. Specialist mages may appear at the DM's discretion, but the available schools of magic should always be borne in mind.

### Priests

In a Celtic campaign, the priest group consists of druids, bards, and seers. Note that this is a major change for bards, who are listed as rogues in the *Player's Handbook*.

### Clerics

The Druids were the priesthood of the Celts, and clerics in a Celtic campaign will always be outsiders—perhaps Christian missionaries from the Romanized world. The comments regarding paladins earlier in this chapter apply with equal force to clerics.

### Druids

The druid as presented in the *Player's Handbook* bears little resemblance to the historical Celtic priesthood of the same name, and requires substantial changes to fit into a Celtic campaign. These changes are as follows:

**Requirements.** A druid must be human. Intelligence must be 15 or greater and Wisdom 12 or greater. Both scores are prime requisites.

**Proficiencies.** All druids must have the following initial nonweapon proficiencies: astrology, religion, and spellcraft. The command of local history gained under the general knowledge ability (see **Granted Abilities** below) does not require a proficiency slot.

**Weapons Allowed.** Druids may not wear armor. Permitted weapons are dagger, club, sickle, staff, spear, and sling.

**Spells Allowed.** Druids have major access to the spheres of all, divination, and healing. They have minor access to the spheres of animal, plant, weather, and charm. Druids may use magical items as priests, but may not use written items such as scroll and tomes, armor, or prohibited weapons.

**Granted Powers.** Druids make saving throws as priests in all respects. They use the cleric column of the **Priest Experience Levels Table**, and roll six-sided dice for hit points rather than eight-sided dice. They have a secret language as mentioned in the *Player's Handbook*, but its scope is restricted to divination and ritual matters instead of nature.

Druids gain the ability to speak a nonhuman language at 3rd level, another at 6th, another at 9th, and another every third level thereafter. These languages do not take up proficiency slots. They have a general knowledge ability exactly like that described for bards on p. 34 of the *Player's Handbook*. Druids command immense respect from the rest of Celtic society. A druid gains a bonus of +1 per two levels on encounter reactions with Celtic humans.

**Ethos and Druid Organization.** These sections of the *Player's Handbook* (pp. 37-38) are not appropriate for druids in a Celtic campaign, and should be ignored. This includes the special abilities gained by druids of 16th and higher levels. Druidic ethos and organization in a Celtic campaign are discussed in **Chapter 8** of this book.

### Bards

In a Celtic campaign, bards belong to the priest group rather than being a type of rogue. Celtic bards were certainly singers and poets, but their priestly function made them much more than entertainers. They were the repositories of history, law, and lore—in their memories lay the whole of the unwritten Celtic tradition.

Celtic bards are very different from bards as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. The necessary changes are as follows:

**Requirements.** Bards must be human. Dexterity must be 12 or greater and Intelligence 15 or greater. Both are prime requisites.

**Proficiencies.** A bard must start with the following nonweapon proficiencies: ancient history, religion, and spellcraft. Any knowledge-type proficiency costs a bard only one proficiency slot.

**Weapons Allowed.** Bards may not wear armor. They may use daggers, clubs, or slings.

**Spells Allowed.** Bards have minor access to the spheres of divination, charm, and all. Characters born with magical affinity or appropriate Sidhe blood may multi-class as bard/mages. Bards may use any magical items usable by druids, plus any magical musical instruments.

**Granted Powers.** Bards progress as clerics on the **Priest Experience Levels Table**, and roll six-sided dice for hit points, like druids. They make saving throws as priests. Bards have no thief abilities. They have the following abilities as listed in the *Player's Handbook* influence reactions; inspiring music, poetry and stories; counter effects of songs and poetry used as magical attacks; and general



knowledge. Note that the general knowledge does not include the ability to read magical writings, unless they are written in ogham. Bards command respect from the rest of Celtic society. A bard gains a bonus of +1 per three levels on encounter reactions with Celtic humans.

**Curses.** Bards have the ability to inflict curses on those who offend them, in the form of magical verses. At 2nd level, a bard gains the use of the priest spell *curse* (the reverse of *bless*), and at 5th level the bard gains the use of *bestow curse* (the reverse of *remove curse*). A bard may remove curses inflicted by any bard of lower level.

### Rogues

As already mentioned, bards are treated as priests in a Celtic campaign. The only rogue character class in a Celtic campaign is the thief.

### Thieves

Thieves in Celtic campaigns are very much as described in the *Player's Handbook*. However, there are a few adjustments, as follows:

**Reactions.** Thieves are not regarded with the usual tolerance in the Celtic world as they are in most "standard" fantasy campaigns. A character known to be a thief suffers a -2 penalty on all encounter reactions.

**Followers.** Celtic thieves do not attract followers.

**Weapons Allowed.** Celtic thieves can use any of the weapons and armor types available to fighters (see p. 19). However, armor heavier than leather hampers a thief's ability to move silently and climb walls. Penalties are -5% for ring mail, -15% for scale or chain mail, -20% for heavier armor types, and -25% (cumulative with armor) for a shield. If the shield is slung over the character's back, the penalty is reduced to -10% for climbing walls only.

**Abilities.** Celtic thieves do not have a thieves' cant, and may not use scrolls or read languages.

## New Character Classes

In addition to the permitted character classes from the *Player's Handbook*, the Celtic world has one new character class. This is the manteis or seer, which is a new priest class.

### Manteis (Seer)

The manteis (singular and plural—also known

to classical historians as vates) were a caste of diviners and seers who formed a part of the Celtic priesthood along with druids and bards. The manteis are not ideally suited to adventuring, and the DM should consider carefully whether to allow them as player characters in a campaign, or whether to keep them as NPCs.

**Requirements.** A manteis must be human. Intelligence and Wisdom scores both must be 12 or greater; both are prime requisites. In addition, a character must have the birth-gift of seer in order to become a manteis.

**Proficiencies.** Manteis gain weapon and non-weapon proficiencies as priests do.

**Weapons Allowed.** Manteis are not permitted to use armor. They may use a dagger, staff, and sling.

**Spells Allowed.** Manteis have major access to the sphere of divination, and major access to all wizard spells of the school of greater divination, just as though this was a sphere of priest spells. They may use all magical items usable by druids, as well as all magical items which have a divinatory function.

**Granted Powers.** Manteis progress as clerics on the **Priest Experience Levels Table**, and roll four-sided dice for hit points. They save as priests, but gain a bonus of +2 to all saving throws against magic of the illusion/phantasm and enchantment/charm types. They also gain +2 to all dice rolls to detect any kind of falsehood (e.g., lies, forgery) or concealment (e.g., secret doors, hidden treasure). Manteis command respect from the rest of Celtic society. A manteis gains a bonus of +1 per 3 levels on encounter reactions with Celtic humans.

## Proficiencies

If the optional proficiency system is being used in the campaign, players are allowed to choose their characters' proficiencies freely, according to the rules and subject to the initial proficiencies listed in the character class descriptions earlier in this chapter. The following secondary skills and non-weapon proficiencies are not available, for cultural or historical reasons:

**Table 5: Nonapplicable Proficiencies**

Limner/Painter	Heraldry
Mason	Riding, Airborne
Scribe	Stonemasonry
Teamster/Freighter	Languages
Forgery	



The Celts were a linguistic group as well as a cultural one, and originally there was one Celtic language. However, during the time period that the Celtic world offers the most opportunities for adventuring—the three or four centuries either side of the time of Christ—the Celtic language had split into two distinct groups, each comprising a number of dialects. The groups are P-Celtic, also known as Brythonic, and Q-Celtic, also known as Goidelic. The dialects are as follows:

**P-Celtic:** Welsh, Breton, British Celtic (probably), Gaulish (probably), and Cornish.

**Q-Celtic:** Scots Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, and Manx (according to some).

For game purposes, it is best to treat P-Celtic and Q-Celtic as separate languages, each requiring a separate proficiency to learn. A character starts with a knowledge of the language and dialect of his birth. As an optional rule, an Intelligence ability check might be needed to understand (or avoid misunderstanding!) anything said in another dialect, until the character has sufficient experience of the dialect to understand it easily. Likewise, when learning a Celtic language, the character starts with an understanding of only one dialect, and may misunderstand anything said in another.

Characters with the opportunity to learn additional languages might use the list below:

**Latin** (most of mainland Europe from 50 B.C. to A.D. 450)

**Anglo-Saxon** (England from A.D. 450 onward)

**Old Saxon** (northern Germany)

**Frисian** (Netherlands and western Germany)

**Old Norse** (Scandinavia)

**Frankish** (Gaul from about A.D. 500 onward)

**Greek** (eastern Mediterranean lands)

As noted above, this list is simplified, ignoring several languages and all dialects. Those who want to introduce more native tongues into their game can find more information in most libraries. Be aware, however, that too many languages can cause problems, adding unnecessary complication to the experience of role-playing by bringing communication to a standstill at vital moments.

## Other Details

Of course, the “hard facts” of ability scores, race, class, and proficiencies are by no means all that define a player character or NPC. Other features—sex, name, age, homeland, and social status—are nearly or equally as important. Since a

Celtic campaign is not a standard fantasy world, the differences and effects of all these choices need to be considered.

### Gender

The first impression that most players have of the Celtic culture is that it is male-dominated. Kings, warriors, druids, bards—all these words conjure up a predominantly male image. However, this image is only partially correct.

Celtic society did feature women in powerful positions. Queens could wield power in their own right as well as conspiring behind the throne. There were female warriors, although they were rare. Cu Chulainn, the greatest of the Irish heroes, was trained by the warrior-woman Scathach, and queens like Boudicca and Medb took to the battlefield quite routinely. Druidesses are mentioned by classical sources, although it is unclear whether they had the same status as their male counterparts or whether they took some specialized role in religious observance. Female spellcasters are far from unknown.

As in 20th-century Euro-American culture, Celtic women were theoretically able to do anything a man could do. In practice, though, there were social pressures which encouraged women to stay at home and bear and raise children, and female warriors—or women doing “men’s work” in any form—would raise a few eyebrows and a few pointed comments. But, provided a woman was prepared to be twice as tough, twice as dedicated, twice as talented, and twice as hardworking as her male counterparts, she could win grudging acceptance in almost any role.

Outsiders viewed Celtic women somewhat differently. Roman historians marveled at their size, strength, and ferocity, and in many ways the “civilized” Mediterranean view of Celtic and Germanic women laid the foundations for a lasting fascination with barbarian women warriors that has left its mark on mythology and fantasy even to this day. Celtic women were certainly more liberated than their Roman counterparts.

There is no reason why any player should choose against a female character simply on the grounds of gender, thinking that adventuring is not appropriate for women. Instead, the special considerations and challenges that might be presented by playing a female character in a Celtic campaign should be considered.



## Celtic Names

Celtic names vary over time and space, so this list falls into various sections. Gaulish names of the Roman period were very different from Irish names of the heroic age, which in turn were very different from the Welsh and British names mentioned in the *Mabinogion*. A separate list is provided for each of these settings, subdivided into male and female names.

### Gaulish and British Names

The Roman writers who recorded most of the Gaulish names we know today turned them into Latin, adding the -us and -a word endings of most Roman names and spelling them in a way that would work in their own language. This is not necessarily how the Gauls and Britons used their names. The list below gives Gaulish and British names as recorded by Roman historians; where a more Celtic spelling is known, this is given in parentheses. Most Gaulish male names can be made more authentically Celtic by converting the -us word ending into -os.

#### Gaulish Male Names

Acco	Gobannitio
Adiatauanus	Gutuater
Ambiorix	Indutiomarus
Andecom bogius	Liscus
Boduognatus	Litaviccus
Camulogenus	Lucterius
Casticus	Moritasgus
Catamantaloedius	Nammeius
Catuvolcus	Orgetorix
Cavarillus	Sedullus
Cavarinus	Surus
Celtillus	Tasgetius
Cingetorix	Teutomatus
Conconnetodumnu s	Valetiacus
Convictolitavis	Vercassivellaunus
Correus	Vercingetorix
Critognatus	Vertico
Diviciacus	Vertiscus
Dumnacus	Viridomarus
Dumnorix	Viridovix
Duratius	Voccio

#### British Male Names

Adminius	Boduoccus
----------	-----------

Caratacus (Caradoc)

Carvilius

Cassivellaunus (Caswallon)

Cogidubnus

Commius

Cunobelinus (Cunobelin,  
Shakespeare's Cymbeline)

Eppillus

Lugotorix

Mandubracius (Mandubrath)

Prasutagus

Segovax

Tasciovanus

Taximagulus

Venutius

Verica

Fachtna

Fe(a)rghal

Fedilmid

Ferchertnae

Fergne

Fergus

Fiachach

Fiachu

Fiad

Fiatach

Find

Findchad

Findtan

Finghin

Fi(o)nn

Foenglinde

Follomon

Froech

Furbude

Galbaglinde

Gerrce

Guaire

Id

Illand

Imchad

Inloth

Loeg

Loeghaire

Loegure

Lomnae

Lug(h)aid(h)

Mal

Mane

Manech

Mend

Muinremur

Muredach

Niall

Noisiu

Oengus

Rochad

Rus

Sainrith

Sedlang

Senchae

Scrub

Sualtaim

Tadhg

Tindell

Traithgren

Trebuit

Triath

#### British Female Names

Boudicca (also known as Boadicea)

Cartimandua

#### Irish Names

Many Irish names have come down to us in literature, and the following list is only a selection. Some of the names may seem a little difficult to pronounce at first glance, but this is nothing to worry about; just remember that bh is pronounced "v" and dh is pronounced as a voiced "th" as in "therefore."

#### Irish Male Names

Adarc	Bron	Conn
Agnoman	Bude	Connad
Aillil	Cailidin	Cormac
Ain(n/d)le	Caitle	Cumhaill
Amhairghen	Cain	Curir
Amorgen	Cathbhadh	Curnach
Art	Ceithern	Dall
Ath	Celtchair	Dallan
Athairne	Cet	Dangus
Beothach	Cethernd	Dare
Bicne	Cliu	Delbaeth
Bile	Cobhthach	Diarmaid
Birderg	Coirpre	Donall
Blai	Con(n)all	Dond
Bran	Conare	Echbel
Brea	Conchubur	Echu
Brenainn	Condere	Eibhear
Bress	Con(d)lae	Eogan
Brian	Congachnes	Erc
Bricriu	Connmac	Eterscelae



### Irish Female Names

Aife	Ide	Dadweir	Gwalchmei	Ondyaw
Badb	Fedelm	Dalldav	Gwalhaved	Owein
Blathnait	Findabhair	Daned	Gwallawg	Penn
Boand	Findbec	Deorthach	Gwarthegydd	Peredur
Ibormeith	Findchoem	Digon	Gwawl	Rheged
Conchend	Findige	Dillus	Gweir	Rhioganedd
Deichtine	Grainne	Dirmyg	Gwenwynwyn	Rhonabwy
Deirdriu	Lebhorcham	Drem	Gwern	Rhun
Eimher	Lennabhair	Drudwas	Gwevyl	Rhuwawn
Eithne	Niam	Drych	Gwylim	Rhyawdd
Emer	Sadhbh	Drystan	Gwres	Sel
Etain	Scathach	Duach	Gwydref	Selyv
		Dwnn	Gwydyon	Sinnoch
		Dylan	Gwyngad	Sugyn
		Dyvynarth	Gwynn	Suleyn
		Dyvyr	Gwystyl	Syvwlch
		Dywel	Gwythyr	Tarawd
		Edern	Heilyn	Teithi
		Eiddoel	Howel	Teregud
		Eiladar	Huabwy	Tringad
		Eiryn	Huarwar	Twrch
		Elphin	Hueil	Uchdryd
		Erbin	Iddig	Uryen
		Ergyryad	Ifor	Ysgawyn
		Ermid	Iorwerth	Ystufach
		Eudav	Iustig	
		Eus	Llacheu	
		Evrwg	Llara	
		Fflam	Llassar	
		Fflergant	Llawr	
		Fflewdwr	Llewelyn	
		Ffodor	Llwyd	
		Gandwy	Llwyd	
		Garanhon	Mabon	
		Garanwyn	Mabsant	
		Garth	Madawg	
		Garwy	Mael	
		Garwyli	Maelwys	
		Garym	Manawydan	
		Gereint	March	
		Gilvaethwy	Math	
		Gleis	Mathonwy	
		Glewleyd	Medyr	
		Glinyeu	Meilyg	
		Gobrwy	Menw	
		Goreu	Nil	
		Gormant	Moren	
		Govan	Morgan	
		Govannon	Moervan	
		Govynydd	Naw	
		Granwen	Neb	
		Gruffydd	Nerth	
		Culhwch	Nerthach	
		Culvanawd	Nynnaw	
		Custennin	Gusg	

### Welsh Names

The Welsh language can look a little intimidating to non-natives, but is not as difficult to pronounce as it appears. Just remember the following key pronunciations:

bh "v" as in "vain."

dh voiced "th," as in "there."

ch soft "ch," as in Scottish "loch."

ll "chl" as in "Loch Lomond," but only at the start of a word.

w can be used as a vowel, sounding much like "u" as in "ruin" in these circumstances. When used as a consonant, it sounds the same as in English.

y "i" as in "into."

These simple rules are not 100% accurate, but should help non-Welsh speakers cope with Welsh names.

### Welsh Male Names

Alun	Brys	Garth	Madawg	Essyllt
Amathaon	Bwlch	Garwy	Mael	Eurneid
Amhar	Cadwgawn	Garwyli	Maelwys	Eurolwyn
Amlawdd	Cadwr	Garym	Manawydan	Goewin
Amren	Cadwy	Gereint	March	Goleuddydd
Anarawd	Cadyryeith	Gilvaethwy	Math	Gorasgwrn
Angawdd	Calcas	Gleis	Mathonwy	Gwaeddan
Anoth	Caradawg	Glewleyd	Medyr	Gwenabwy
Anwas	Carnedyr	Glinyeu	Meilyg	Gwenddydd
Anynnawg	Cas	Gobrwy	Menw	Gwenledyr
Ardwyad	Casnar	Goreu	Nil	Gwerfyl
Avaon	Caswallawn	Gormant	Moren	Morfudd
Bedwyr	Cawrdav	Govan	Morgan	Neued
Bedyw	Clust	Govannon	Moervan	Pennardun
Berth	Cnychwr	Govynydd	Naw	Rathtyen
Berwyn	Conyn	Granwen	Neb	Rhiannon
Bradwen	Culhwch	Gruffydd	Nerth	Tangwen
Bran	Culvanawd	Gruffydd	Nerthach	Tegwedd
Brathach	Custennin	Gusg	Nynnaw	Teleri
Bryn(n)				

### Welsh Female Names

Angharad	
Aranrhod	
Blodeuwedd	
Branwen	
Eheubryd	
Ellylw	
Eneuawg	
Enrhydreg	
Essyllt	
Eurneid	
Eurolwyn	
Goewin	
Goleuddydd	
Gorasgwrn	
Gwaeddan	
Gwenabwy	
Gwenddydd	
Gwenledyr	
Gwerfyl	
Morfudd	
Neued	
Pennardun	
Rathtyen	
Rhiannon	
Tangwen	
Tegwedd	
Teleri	



## Names

Players and DMs can choose names as they wish, but some of the Celtic feel of the campaign is lost if there are characters with names like Fred and Joe. The flavor of a Celtic campaign is considerably enhanced if characters have authentic Celtic names. To do this, it is helpful to understand a few things about Celtic names and the way they worked.

Under most circumstances, a character would only need one name—a personal name. There is a series of name-lists on pp. 24-5, organized by place.

Sometimes, more than one name was required to identify a particular character. If there were three people called Fergus in a particular village, for instance, it helped to know whether one was talking about Fergus Mac Conall, Fergus O’Niall, or Fergus Mac Eogan.

If a character needed more than a personal name, then it was most common to refer to the name of the character’s father. Noble characters, who were proud of their lineage, did this as a matter of course. This was done in various ways, according to the region.

In Ireland and Scotland, the prefix Mac was added between the personal name and the father’s name. Thus, Fergus Mac Conall was Fergus, the son of Conall. Later, in Ireland, O was used instead of Mac, giving names like O’Conell, O’Neill, etc.

In Wales, the prefix ap was used instead of Mac. Thus, Glyn ap Owen was Glyn, the son of Owen.

In Celtic Gaul and Britain, classical authors make no mention of any use of surnames, and it is possible that they were not used at all. It is more likely, though, that some term meaning “son of” was used, and was literally translated into Latin by the Roman commentators. Now it is lost, and players and DMs can decide whether to use Mac, ap, or simply “son of” in such cases.

Women, when they needed surnames, used their father’s name as well, with a prefix meaning “daughter of.”

Occasionally, a character would be known by a nickname, referring to some great deed or some outstanding trait. Cu Chulainn’s true name was Setanta; he was better known as Cu Chulainn (“the hound of Culann”) after a childhood exploit in which he killed a ferocious dog belonging to a smith named Culann, and then volunteered to

guard Culann’s house and goods in the dog’s place. The Irish king Niall of the Nine Hostages took a nickname from one of his political arrangements, which indicated that he was a man to be reckoned with. And, according to some scholars, Julius Caesar’s British ally Mandubracius may have been born with the name Avarwy, with the name Mandubracius being derived from the Celtic nickname *dhu bradwr*, which means “black traitor.”

## Age

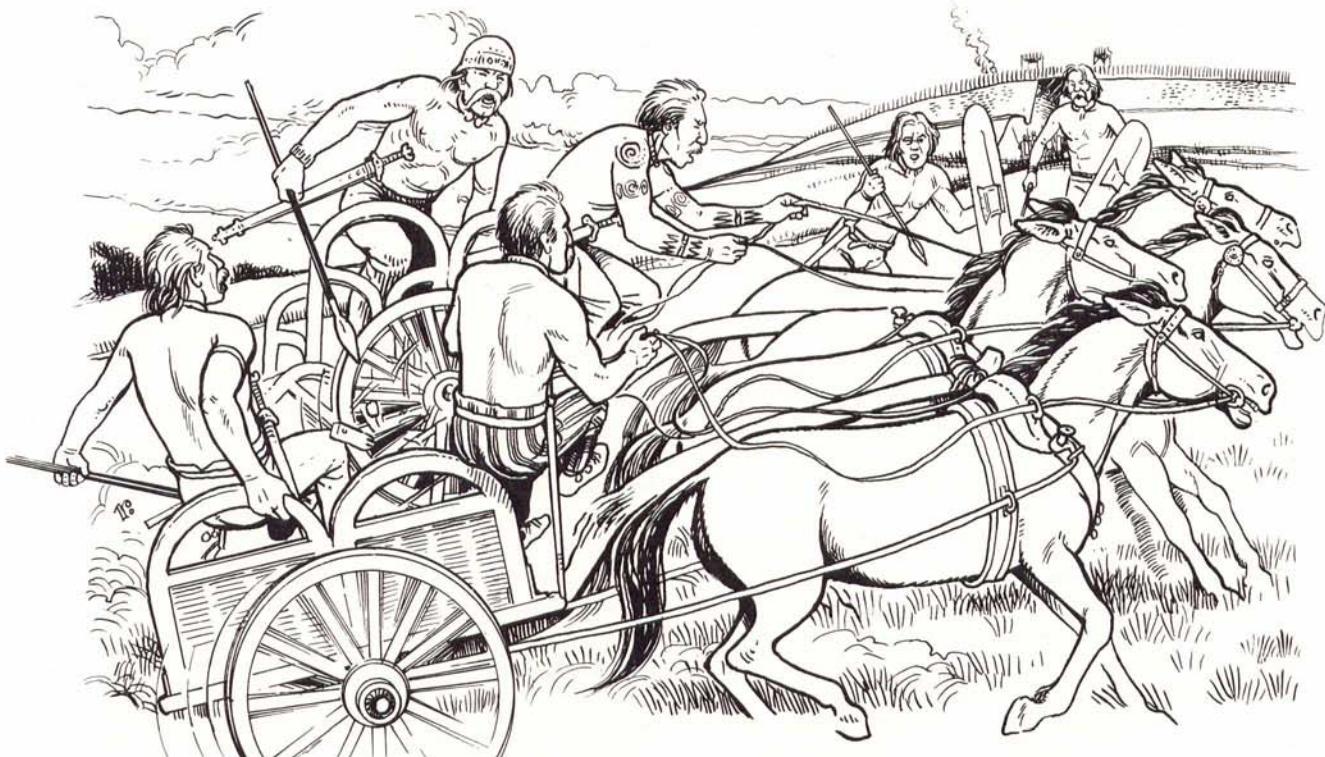
Players and DMs can choose whatever age they desire for characters. Cu Chulainn was already capable of heroic deeds at the age of six, and was seventeen when the main action of the *Tain Bo Cuailnge* took place. Although there is no direct evidence, it appears that the Celts regarded the mid-teens as the beginning of adulthood.

However, players can begin their character’s careers at any age they wish. While youth and strength might be an advantage to a warrior, age and experience would add to the wisdom of a druid or bard. According to some classical sources, bards had to train for twenty years in order to memorize all the songs, poems, stories, and other material that formed the Celtic oral tradition.

## Homeland

A character’s “homeland” could mean a number of different things. In the pagan period across nearly all of the Celtic world, a character who was asked “Where are you from?” would have responded with the name of his tuath, or tribe. In later periods, the names of provinces (e.g., Britain, Gaul, Galatia) might be used in answer or the names of kingdoms (e.g., Ulster, Munster, Leinster), which were made up of several allied tribes.

Under most circumstances, the DM should assume that all the player characters in a particular party will be from the same part of the world, and probably (but not always) from the same tribe. It is not likely that a party would include a Galatian from modern Turkey, a Gaul from modern Belgium, a Welshman, an Irishman, a Scot, and a Romanized Briton. Where would such a group have met and how would they have come together? The mixing of origins should wait until the campaign has been under way for a while, and until characters have done enough traveling to make reasonable explanations possible. A Welsh character might join an Irish party (to



replace a casualty) while they are adventuring in Wales, for instance.

When beginning a Celtic campaign, the DM may want to allow initial player characters to be from one or two lands which are not too far apart. Here are the main choices:

Scotland

Ireland

Wales

Britain

Gaul

Brittany (after A.D. 450)

Once a starting land has been chosen, the DM should select an area within the land—ideally, the territory of just one or two tribes. For example, the DM chooses Gaul as the starting land. Looking at the map of the Celtic world, he decides to start the characters in the rugged coastal territory of the Veneti. Therefore, most of the characters should be Veneti by birth. The few outsiders would probably be from the neighboring tribes of the Namnetes, Osisimi, Coriosolitae, and Redones, perhaps with a slight chance of a British character who has come by sea from the lands of the Dumnonii or Duro-

triges. The character's kindred would be almost exclusively in their home tribal areas.

### Social Class

Celtic society was divided into a number of distinct classes, and although a character could rise in rank through outstanding deeds, the class of a character's birth counted for a great deal.

At the top of the tree was the nobility—*fliath* in Irish. This was the class from which kings and chieftains were drawn, as well as the professional warriors of the hero-tales.

Next came the priesthood and the skilled craftspeople, known in Irish as the *aes dana* (the gifted people). Admission to this class was determined by ability rather than birth.

Finally, and most numerous, was the freeman class. These people were mainly farmers, fishermen, hunters, and trappers who frequently made a living by more than one of these pursuits. Minor craftsmen—generally speaking, those who did not make prestige items like weapons and jewelry—also belonged to this class.

For game purposes, most characters are assumed to be from modest farming families, seeking fame



and advancement through adventuring and brave deeds. Only those with the appropriate birth-gift are members of the nobility. Druids, bards, and manteis are *aes dana*.

## Heroic Feats

Celtic hero-sagas are full of fantastic feats of arms. All the feats covered below should be treated as weapon proficiencies, unless stated otherwise. All are available only to warriors, except the tathlum, which is also available to druids.

These feats are the mark of a true hero, and unskilled characters who attempt them nearly always end up looking foolish. To reflect this, the normal nonproficiency penalties are multiplied by the number of slots required for the feat. Thus, an unskilled warrior may attempt the salmon leap (1 slot) at the normal -2 penalty, but if an unskilled character attempts the legendary feat of the gae bolga (6 slots), the penalty is a staggering -12.

It should be noted that all of these new proficiencies are optional, and the DM's decision is final as to which, if any, are allowed in the campaign. Hyperbole and exaggeration—especially in the description of heroic combats—are part and parcel of Celtic literature, and the tales from which these feats are drawn have almost certainly grown in the telling. Some DMs may feel that including heroic feats will threaten game balance, and may choose to downgrade their power, increase their cost in proficiency slots, or ignore them altogether.

### Chariot-jump

This feat is a nonweapon proficiency, and requires 4 proficiency slots. A character must have the charioteering proficiency in order to learn the feat of the chariot-jump.

By using this feat, a character can actually jump a chariot over a chasm, a stream, or a low obstacle such as a fallen tree (or a fallen comrade!). The feat requires a Dexterity check, modified according to the nature of the obstacle. A chasm or stream imposes a penalty of -1 per 3 feet of width (round up), while a standing obstacle imposes a penalty of -1 per foot of height. A prone character is about 1 foot high, and a fallen tree can be somewhat higher. There is a -3 penalty for every character in the chariot apart from the charioteer. In all cases, the chariot requires a clear approach distance of at least 30 yards.

If the proficiency check is successful, the chariot

leaps the obstacle and lands safely on the other side. If not, it slams full-tilt into the obstacle, risking damage to the chariot and injury to the horses and passengers.

### Del Chliss

This is a feat using a thrown spear. It requires 2 weapon proficiency slots, and the character must already be proficient with the throwing spear in order to learn the feat of the *del chliss*.

If an attack roll succeeds by 2 or more, the spear is thrown in such a way that it twists on impact, causing double normal damage to the unfortunate target. No proficiency check is necessary.

A spear which is thrown using the feat of the *del chliss* imposes a -2 penalty to the Dexterity check of anyone trying to catch it. It is not possible to use the feat of the *del chliss* while throwing a spear which was caught in the same round, as it is necessary to throw the spear with a special grip.

### Gae Bolga

This is the rarest of all feats, and the hardest to master. In the whole of Celtic tradition, only the great Irish hero Cu Chulainn and Scathach, the woman-warrior who trained him, had mastery of the *gae bolga*. This is easy to understand in the light of what the feat entails.

The *gae bolga* is a barbed spear, which must be thrown using the foot rather than the hand. If it strikes, the spear's barbs tear through the victim's flesh terribly, almost guaranteeing death.

The feat of the *gae bolga* requires 6 weapon proficiency slots. A character must be already proficient with the spear and must have a Dexterity of at least 17 before this feat can be learned.

When the feat of the *gae bolga* is used, the character may make no other attacks in that round or the next, and loses all Dexterity-based AC adjustments for those two rounds. This is because the feat requires absolute concentration, and leaves the character off-balance. A normal attack roll is made for the attack, and if it succeeds, the character may use his level as a multiplier for the spear's damage. Thus, in the hands of a 3rd-level character, the *gae bolga* causes triple normal damage, while in the hands of a 10th-level character, damage is multiplied by 10.



## Salmon Leap

The hero's salmon leap is one of the more common feats. The salmon leap is a standing high jump, which can be used in battle to strike over an opponent's shield or leap over an attacking weapon. The salmon leap occupies 1 weapon proficiency slot, and a character must already have the nonweapon proficiency of jumping in order to learn the salmon leap.

By using the salmon leap (which counts as an attack), a character may make a standing high jump of  $1d3 + \text{his level}$  in feet, with a minimum of 3 feet. Combining the salmon leap with an attack over an opponent's shield gives the attack +2 to hit unless the opponent makes a successful Dexterity ability check. Using the salmon leap to dodge an attack improves the character's Armor Class by 2.

The character makes a Dexterity ability check to see whether the salmon leap was successfully carried out. If not, the leap is the normal 3 feet allowed by the jumping nonweapon proficiency, and the combat bonuses do not apply.

## Shield-rim

The feat of the shield-rim is an attack using the sharpened rim of a special shield. It requires 2 weapon proficiency slots. The attack is treated as an attack with a khopesh sword in all respects.

## Spear Catch

This impressive feat allows a character to catch a spear thrown at him and hurl it right back. A character must be proficient in the use of a throwing spear in order to learn this feat, which takes 2 weapon proficiency slots.

Catching and returning a spear counts as a single attack; the character must make a Dexterity check to catch the spear, modified by half the difference in levels (rounded up) between the catcher and the thrower. For example, a 3rd-level character trying to catch a spear thrown by a 10th-level character has a penalty of  $(3 - 10) \times 0.5 = -3.5$ , or -4, while a 10th-level character trying to catch a spear thrown by a 3rd-level character has a bonus of +4. If the check is failed, the attack is resolved normally.

Having caught the spear, the character may throw it back by making a normal attack roll. The catch and throw count as a single attack. The spear may be thrown at its original thrower, or at anyone or anything within a 5-foot radius of the original thrower, subject to normal targeting rules. A

character may always choose to keep a spear rather than throw it back.

## Stroke of Precision

This feat requires 2 weapon proficiency slots, but also requires that the character specialize in an edged melee weapon. The stroke of precision may only be used with that weapon.

Before making the attack roll, the player may nominate a body location that the character is trying to hit. This counts as a called shot and incurs the normal -4 penalty to hit and +1 to initiative. If the attack roll succeeds, it has a chance of severing the location as though it were an attack with a *sword of sharpness*. The number rolled on the attack die, with no modifiers, is used to determine this.

## Warrior's Scream

This nonweapon proficiency requires 2 slots. The warrior's scream is a terrifying battle cry that strikes fear into the hearts of one's enemies. A character may utter the warrior's scream only on the first round of combat with a particular opponent, and gives up his first attack of that round in order to do so.

This feat requires a Constitution check. If successful, it has the effect of the 3rd-level priest spell *prayer*, but only on the character who uttered the scream and his current opponent. Opponents must roll a successful saving throw vs. fear to negate the effects of the scream; this saving throw may be rolled at the start of each melee round until it is successful.

## Yoke-Pole

The feat of the yoke-pole is a nonweapon proficiency requiring 2 slots, and a character must already have the charioteering proficiency.

This feat involves running along the yoke-pole of a chariot while it is going at full speed—a risky business, as failure will send the character tumbling beneath the horses' hooves and the chariot's wheels. It is used solely to impress, and has very few practical applications—although inventive player characters may find a few.

The feat requires a Dexterity ability check. Success gains the character a +1 bonus on encounter reactions with all who witness the feat, while failure results in a fall, the individual suffering 2d8 points of damage.



Magic in a Celtic campaign is a little different from magic in a standard fantasy campaign, for a number of reasons.

First, the nature and distribution of magic is very different in a Celtic campaign. Although there can be a great deal of very powerful magic in the background, actual spellcasters are far less numerous—and often less powerful—than in a normal fantasy campaign. In the Celtic world, places are more often magical than people.

Second, there is a difference in who can use magic. In a Celtic campaign, any character type can be born with the ability to use magic, but this gift is rare. There are few professional wizards in the Celtic world, although the druids and other members of the priesthood can call upon powerful magic at need.

Third, there are some kinds of magic from the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* that are not appropriate to a Celtic campaign, for historical or cultural reasons. The same applies to magical items.

This chapter offers a brief summary of Celtic magic, including spells, spellcasters, magic items, and magical places.

## Celtic Spellcasters

Celtic spellcasters fall into three basic categories: gifted spellcasters, trained spellcasters, and monsters and NPCs.

### Gifted Spellcasters

As noted in Chapter 3, any character can be born with a talent for magic. The birth-gift of Sidhe blood, in one of its manifestations, permits a character to use magic, and so does the gift of magical affinity.

Any character (even humans) born with either of these gifts may become multi-classed, combining the class of mage with any other class except druid or manteis. The normal rules that restrict certain class combinations are suspended in these two cases. Thus, a character born with a magical talent may combine as a fighter/mage, ranger/mage, bard/mage, or thief/mage. This is the only method of multi-classing which is permitted in a Celtic campaign.

A gifted character need not start out multi-classed if the player does not wish to do so. The player may decide to start running the character as multi-classed at a later date or never at all. If a gift-

ed character is not being run as multi-classed, then the character gains the advantage of possessing the better of the two saving throws between the chosen class and a 1st-level wizard.

All other rules regarding multi-class characters apply normally.

### Trained Spellcasters

The only trained spellcasters in a Celtic campaign are members of the priestly class: druids, bards, and manteis. Like wizards in a normal fantasy campaign, they learn their magic by long and rigorous training.

Druids are the priests, counselors, royal advisors, and judges of Celtic society, and their training permits no distractions. For this reason, a magically gifted character (see previous section) who becomes a druid may not multi-class as a mage. All the character's magical talent is channeled into gaining the skills and wisdom required of a druid.

Bards are historians, genealogists, and general cultural data-banks, as well as poets and minstrels. Their songs and verses are almost incidental, serving mainly to guard and preserve the Celtic oral tradition by expressing that tradition in a form which is easily remembered and passed on. Even so, their music and poetry is not without power; they can mold the emotions, shape and destroy reputations, and sometimes harm a man's body as well as his honor. Their training and function encourages bards to acquire a body of lore and general knowledge, and those born with a gift for magic may become bard/mages—people to be reckoned with, indeed.

Manteis are diviners and seers, and must be born with a gift for divination. This effectively bars them from having a gift for magic, since characters may roll only once on the **Character Gift Table**. The training of a manteis centers around predicting the future and understanding the unknown, valuable gifts for a wise and far-sighted ruler. Like the rest of the priestly class, manteis are held in great esteem.

### Monsters and NPCs

In Celtic stories, certain monsters, nonhuman races, and evil NPC spellcasters have a much less restricted magic use than the heroes. This is a common feature in many bodies of myth and legend; in narrative terms, it gives the heroes a powerful and impressive opponent to overcome by their old-



fashioned virtues of strength, fighting prowess, faith, and honor. In game terms, this concept requires some thought to avoid the prospect of super-powerful NPC enchanters or hordes of spellcasting monsters from simply taking over the campaign area, wiping out every PC sent against them, and reducing the campaign to a shambles.

**Chapter 5** covers monsters in detail, including their magical abilities. DMs should also consult **Chapter 11** of the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, which includes valuable guidance on staging and balancing encounters.

Evil NPC mages can be single-class characters. Theoretically, this is also possible for player characters, but it is not recommended for cultural reasons. The Celtic culture placed great emphasis on traditional warrior-virtues, and on the authority of the druids and the other priestly classes. While it was certainly a fortunate thing to be born with a gift for magic, it was not considered wise to give oneself over to it completely. Without a warrior's strength or a priest's wisdom to temper it, magic could corrupt a person. Player characters who choose to be single-class wizards will be regarded with the same mixture of fear and mistrust as NPC wizards, for in many people's minds it is only a matter of time before they become the same.

It is for this reason that player characters cannot become single-class wizards in a Celtic campaign. As with all the other rules and recommendations in this book, the DM is free to lift this ban in his own campaigns; if PC wizards are allowed, however, it is strongly recommended that a character should still be required to have one of the two magical birth-gifts (see *Gifted Spellcasters*, page 31) in order to become a wizard.

## Spells in a Celtic Campaign

The notes on character classes in **Chapter 3** offer some specific comments on those spells which are appropriate for a Celtic campaign. This section gives an overview of spells, examining the similarities and differences between spells from Celtic traditional sources and spells from the *Player's Handbook*.

### Wizard Spells

As has already been noted, professional wizards as such are extremely rare in a Celtic campaign, and are normally NPCs. Of course, wizard spells may still be used by multi-class characters and by the occasional

powerful spellcasting NPC or monster.

Not all of the spells listed in the *Player's Handbook* are suitable for use in a Celtic campaign. The schools of Conjunction/Summoning and Necromancy are not in keeping with the spirit of the Celtic setting, although spells of these schools might be used by exceptional NPC spellcasters, typically strangers from faraway places like the eastern Mediterranean lands.

The most common forms of magic in Celtic tradition are polymorphing (especially changing into animal forms), Enchantment/Charm, Divination, and Illusion/Phantasm. Summoning creatures from other planes is not a part of Celtic tradition, nor are undead creatures and necromantic magic. Ultimately, it is for the DM to decide which spells and which schools of magic are permissible in a specific campaign.

### Priest Spells

Priest spells are usable by druids, bards, and manteis, as noted in **Chapter 3**. Manteis also have major access to wizard spells of the school of Divination. The following table summarizes spell access for the priestly classes:

**Table 6: Priest Spheres**

	Major Access	Minor Access
Druid	All	Animal
	Divination	Charm
	Healing	Plant
Bard	All	Protection
		Weather
		Charm
		Divination
		War (1st & 2nd level only)
Manteis	Divination	Divination (wizard)

Access to other spheres is at the DM's option.

Spells of the Astral sphere have no place in a Celtic campaign, since the Astral plane does not belong to the Celtic world-view.

The Sphere of Combat might be made available to warlike druids, but these spells are by no means common. Perhaps only one reclusive group of druids in a campaign knows of these spells, and they must be sought out in order to learn them.

The Sphere of Creation includes some appropriate spells, especially those to do with food and drink. *Blade barrier* is not recommended for a



Celtic campaign, but druids might have minor access to the others.

The Elemental sphere contains a mixture of spells; some are highly appropriate for a Celtic campaign and others are highly inappropriate. Elementals are not a part of Celtic tradition, so spells for conjuring them would not exist. To be true to the setting, spells involving earth and water are more appropriate than those involving air and fire, but at the DM's option, druids might be given minor access to the Elemental sphere apart from spells involving actual elementals.

The Guardian sphere might be allowed at the DM's option; again, such spells might be known only to a few reclusive NPCs, and trying to obtain training in their use might be an adventure in itself.

The Necromantic sphere, as in the case of wizard spells, is not appropriate for a Celtic campaign. DMs might wish to transfer the 2nd-level spell *aid* to the sphere of All and *cure blindness or deafness* and *cure disease* to the sphere of Healing, since these spells would fit well in a Celtic campaign. The high-level "R-spells"—*raise dead*, *regenerate*, *reincarnate*, *restoration*, and *resurrection*—do not really fit into the Celtic setting, but might be transferred to the sphere of Healing if the DM wishes.

Druids are noted as having minor access to the sphere of Protection, but some amendments are necessary. All spells relating to undead or creatures from other planes are inappropriate in a Celtic campaign, where no such creatures exist.

As with wizard spells, the sphere of Summoning is not in keeping with Celtic tradition, although certain spells might still be used in a Celtic campaign. At the DM's option, the *animal summoning* spells and *conjure animals* might be transferred to the Animal sphere, *wall of thorns* to the Plant sphere, and *weather summoning* to the sphere of Weather. Note that summoned and conjured animals must be species which are native to the Celtic world; this is discussed further in **Chapter 5**.

Finally, the sphere of Sun might be accessible to some characters in a Celtic campaign, although *rainbow* is not appropriate for the setting. The other spells of this sphere might be transferred to the spheres of All or Weather, at the DM's option.

There are no spheres from the *Tome of Magic* that are appropriate to a Celtic campaign, with the exception of the sphere of War. Bards have access to 1st- and 2nd-level spells from this sphere, in keeping with their role as an inspiration on the battlefield. Other *Tome of Magic* spells that are listed

### Reincarnation

Classical authors record that the Gauls had a belief in reincarnation, so some players and DMs may think it wrong to deny druids the use of the 7th-level Priest spell *reincarnate*. However, the spell as presented in the *Player's Handbook* needs a little alteration to bring it into harmony with a Celtic campaign.

First, it should be transferred from the Necromantic sphere to the Healing sphere.

Second, the table which determines the form of the new incarnation includes several inappropriate results. These include all demihuman results (including centaur and faun/satyr) and the raccoon and wolverine, which are not native to Celtic lands. These results can be treated as rolls of 45-58 (Human), 86-00 (DM's choice), or they can be rerolled. Humans tended to be reincarnated as humans in Celtic belief, so the first solution is recommended.

Some DMs may prefer to retain the result 29-31: Elf, treating it as Sidhe. However, the sidhe were a dying race, and births among them were so rare that it is extremely unlikely that a human would be reincarnated as a sidhe.

in original *Player's Handbook* spheres may be appropriate within those spheres, at the DM's option.

### Magical Items from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*

Magical items are comparatively rare in Celtic myth but are wide and imaginative in their variety. Magical weapons and armor are less common than other kinds of magical items but are not unknown.

Many magical items from the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* can be used in a Celtic campaign setting, with the exception of written magic, such as scrolls, books, librams, manuals, and tomes. Magical weapons and armor must be of types available in the Celtic culture; **Chapter 6** covers this in more detail. Items which conjure or produce animals may only produce species native to the Celtic world (see **Chapter 5**); other results must be rerolled. Finally, as with spells, items that have to do with undead or other planes are not appropriate to the Celtic setting.

This is not to say that written magic and non-Celtic magical war gear can have no place in a Celtic campaign; such items must simply have a good reason for appearing. Magical plate or banded armor might have come from Rome, or a magi-



cal scroll from even further afield. If the campaign is set in the time of the mythical Arthur, written magic will be more common, although it will not contain any druidical magic—this is never committed to writing.

The next table lists those items that are not appropriate to a Celtic campaign.

**Table 7: Nonapplicable Magical Items**

**Potions and Oils**

*Potion of Undead Control*

**Rings**

*Ring of Djinni Summoning*

*Ring of Elemental Command*

**Rods**

*Rod of Alertness*

*Rod of Flailing*

*Rod of Passage*

*Rod of Resurrection*

*Rod of Security*

**Staves**

*Staff-Mace*

*Staff-Spear*

*Staff of the Magi*

**Wands**

*Wand of Conjuration*

**Miscellaneous Magic**

*Amulet of the Planes*

*Amulet Versus Undead*

*Apparatus of Kwalish*

all Books

*Bowl Commanding Water Elementals*

*Brazier Commanding Fire Elementals*

*Candle of Invocation*

*Carpet of Flying*

*Censer Controlling Air Elementals*

*Censer of Summoning Hostile Air Elementals*

*Cloak of the Manta Ray*

*Cubic Gate*

*Deck of Illusions*

*Deck of Many Things*

*Efreeti Bottle*

*Eyes of Charming*

*Eyes of the Eagle*

*Eyes of Minute Seeing*

*Eyes of Petrification*

*Horn of Valhalla*

*Incense of Meditation*

*Incense of Obsession*

*Ioun Stones*

*Iron Flask*

all Librums

all Manuals

*Mirror of Mental Prowess* (no plane travel)

*Necklace of Prayer Beads*

*Phylactery of Faithfulness*

*Portable Hole*

*Robe of Stars*

*Rug of Smothering*

*Rug of Welcome*

all Scarabs

*Stone of Controlling Earth Elementals*

*Talisman of Pure Good*

*Talisman of Ultimate Evil*

*Talisman of Zagy*

all Tomes

*Vacuous Grimoire*

*Well of Many Worlds*

**Magical Weapons**

Knife, Buckle

all Maces

all Scimitars

all Tridents

**New Magical Items**

This section gives details on a few magical items from Celtic myth and folklore. Many of them are powerful and unique, and the DM should make sure not to give them away too freely in a campaign. *Bran's Cauldron of Life*, for instance, could be the object of a whole series of adventures—the PCs might be sent to borrow it from a neighboring ruler, have to perform various tasks and give various guarantees that they will return it, and then cope with various enemies who might want to steal it for their own purposes.

***Bran's Cauldron of Life***

This magical pot looks like a large but otherwise normal cauldron, about five feet in diameter. When it is heated over a fire and dead bodies are put in, the bodies are brought back to life.

In order to be brought back to life, a body must be placed in the cauldron before sunset on the day of death. At sunrise the next morning, those inside the cauldron are completely restored to life as though by a resurrection spell, with all their former hit points, experience levels and abilities, and no need to roll for survival. However, they cannot speak or make any other noise—their vocal cords have completely ceased to function. Thus, any spellcasters resurrected by the cauldron can no longer cast spells with a verbal component.



The cauldron has no effect on living creatures or the bodies of animals or demihumans. It can hold up to five bodies at once. A body which is placed in the cauldron after sunset, or removed before sunrise, is dead forever.

### Minor Magical Items

The Welsh tale of "How Cwlhwch Won Olwen" features an interesting selection of magical items, which Cwlhwch has to obtain for Olwen's father Ysbaddaden in order to win her hand. Not all of them are easy to translate into game terms (a magical comb and shears which can untangle the wild-est and most matted hair in the world, for instance), but here is a selection:

*The Hamper of Gwyddno Long Shank.* This magical wicker hamper has an inexhaustible supply of food. Up to 27 people can gather around it at a time, and every one of them will find a filling meal made up of their favorite foods.

*The Harp of Teirtu.* This magical harp will play by itself, and can be commanded to play any tune, or to be silent. The music it produces is pleasing and note-perfect, but is not in itself magical. The harp cannot imitate the sound of other instruments; it always sounds like a harp.

*The Bottles of Gwydolin the Dwarf.* These magical bottles keep their contents at exactly the same temperature as when they were filled. If boiling water is poured into a bottle, the water will still be boiling when the bottle is opened again, even if this is 300 years later at the north pole in winter. Likewise, ice put into one of these bottles will remain frozen until it is taken out, regardless of time, external temperature, and other circumstances.

*The Bottles of Rhynnon Stiff Beard.* These magical bottles will hold any liquid indefinitely, without it souring, curdling, separating or deteriorating in any other way. No matter how long the liquid is stored, it will remain as fresh as the moment it was put into the bottle.

*Selkie Skin.* According to Celtic tradition, Selkies are able to change shape because their skins are magical. In seal form, they are a part of the animal, but when a selkie adopts human form, its skin becomes a fine cloak of sealskin. If this is lost, the selkie can no longer change to seal form, and it will do almost anything to get the skin back. Some selkie skins (5%) allow a human to change to seal form by wearing them. The disguise will fool

selkies at a glance, but an outsider will be spotted on close inspection.

### Magical Places

There are more magical places in Celtic myth than there are magical spells or magical items. If anything can be said to characterize Celtic magic as opposed to the magic of other cultures, it is that it resides in places much more often than in people or things. Many of the mystical places and events which are to be found in the later Arthurian romances have their origin in Celtic tales, particularly those from Wales.

### Magical Islands

In stories from all parts of the Celtic world, islands are to be found that have magical properties of one kind or another. Most magical islands are small—no more than a mile across—and as many magical islands are found in lakes as in the sea. The following table summarizes the properties of a few kinds of magical islands:

**Table 8: Magical Islands**

Die Roll	Island Type
01-05	Deadly
06-15	Deathless
16-30	Disappearing
31-50	Enchanting
51-60	Healing
61-65	Holy
66-70	Male/Female
71-80	Moving
81-90	Prohibitive
91-95	Timeless
96-99	Unholy
00	DM's choice

**Deadly.** Something about the island is inimical to all life, and any living thing setting foot on the island must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison or suffer excruciating pain and lose 1d6 hit points. This save must be repeated every turn until the creature leaves the island or dies. Islands of this type are bare, bleak, and bone-littered.

**Deathless.** Death by natural causes simply does not happen on this island. Disease is unknown, and all the inhabitants are in excellent physical condition. Many will be long past old age, but still extremely fit and active. If any violent death takes place on the island, it has a 5% chance of breaking



the spell that protects the place. If this happens, all the island's inhabitants must roll a successful system shock check immediately or die, and the island will be shaken by earthquakes and begin to sink. Likewise, any of the inhabitants who leaves the island and sets foot on land somewhere else must roll a successful system shock check or die as age and disease catch up with him or her. Islands of this type are generally rugged but not inhospitable.

**Disappearing.** The island appears and disappears from time to time. At any time when it is looked for, it has only a 30% chance of being found; for every day the characters watch and wait for it to appear, it has a 5% cumulative chance of appearing. Once it has appeared, it has a 1% cumulative chance per hour of beginning to sink back beneath the waves. It takes an hour to be covered fully.

**Enchanting.** This type of island is always very beautiful, with an abundance of flowering and fruit-bearing plants, clear springs and streams, beautiful and melodious birds, and often attractive and welcoming inhabitants as well. Anyone who sets foot on this island must roll a successful saving throw vs. spells or become completely enchanted with the place. An enchanted character will do nothing but wander happily about the island eating fruit and drinking the clear water and will absolutely refuse to leave under any circumstances. The enchantment is broken if an enchanted character leaves the island, but characters will normally need to be tricked or overpowered into doing so.

**Healing.** The island magically heals wounds and diseases. All creatures on the island recover 1 lost hit point per hour while there. A randomly-generated island of this type has a 10% chance of being able to raise dead as the spell. Those with diseases may roll a saving throw vs. poison each hour while on the island; on the first success, the afflicted character is cured of the disease. Hit points and ability points lost because of the disease are recovered at the rate of 1 point per hour. All poisons taken onto the island are immediately neutralized as if by the spell *neutralize poison*, and no magic which causes wounds, diseases, poison, or other afflictions will work on the island; material components are used as normal, but there is no spell effect.

**Holy.** The island is sacred to the powers of Good, and the whole island has an aura which is equivalent to a permanent *protection from evil* spell. When a creature of evil alignment sets foot on the island, it suffers severe discomfort, and

must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison every turn while on the island or lose 1d3 hit points. Holy islands are normally very green and attractive places.

**Male/Female.** Something about the island is deadly to members of a certain gender, and it will be observed that all the creatures on it—of every species—are of the same sex. Islands of this type are often found in pairs: one male only and the other female only. A person of the wrong gender setting foot on the island must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison or suffer excruciating pain and lose 1d6 hit points. This save must be repeated every turn until the character leaves the island or dies.

**Moving.** The island moves from time to time. It becomes shrouded in mist, and when the mist clears the island is somewhere else. There is a 1% chance of this happening on any given day; the precise time can be determined by rolling 1d12 twice—the first roll is for a.m. (odd numbers) or p.m. (even numbers), and the second is for the hour. At about this time the mist will start to gather around the island, taking about an hour to become so thick that visibility is reduced to a couple of yards. Then the mist begins to dissipate, taking about an hour to clear completely. The DM can decide where the island has reappeared, or determine it randomly by rolling 1d8 for direction (1 = north, 2 = north-east, 3 = east, and so on) and  $1d4 \times 1d100$  for distance in miles. If there is no body of water in the indicated location, either roll again or place the island in the nearest suitable location. It is common for powerful evil NPCs like enchanters and witches to make their lairs on such islands, and some can control their island's movements by their magic.

**Prohibitive.** The island magically rejects something—it might be items of a certain material, people of a certain alignment, race, or gender, animals of a certain species, or anything else the DM can devise. A prohibited person or substance simply cannot land on the island—the island exerts a magical force which throws the character right back into the boat (or the water!). The following table may be used to generate rejected creatures or substances randomly:



**Table 8a: Prohibited Items**

Die Roll	Prohibited
1	Metal items
2	Wooden items
3	Stone items
4	Weapons
5	Magic items
6	Spellcasters
7	Warriors
8	Good alignments
9	Lawful alignments
10	Evil alignments
11	Chaotic alignments
12	Male creatures
13	Female creatures
14	Humans
15	Sidhe*
16	Fomorians*
17	All except druids
18	Animals
19-20	DM's choice

The effects of the island can be interrupted by *dispel magic*, but only for 1d4 rounds; other spells may have some effect, at the DM's discretion.

**Timeless.** Time does not exactly stand still on the island, but it passes much slower than in the rest of the world. A day on the island is a year for the rest of the world. When someone leaves the island and sets foot on land elsewhere, all the time he has spent on the island catches up with him. In other words, if a character has spent a year on the island, he ages 365 years instantly when he sets foot on another shore! Timeless islands are usually very attractive places, with natural abundance and friendly inhabitants who will do almost anything to prevent visitors from leaving.

**Unholy.** The island is sacred to the powers of Evil, and the whole island has an aura which is equivalent to a permanent *protection from good* spell. When a creature of good alignment sets foot on the island, it suffers severe discomfort, and must roll a successful saving throw vs. poison every turn while on the island or lose 1d3 hit points. Unholy islands are normally very bleak and intimidating places.

### Magical Lakes, Springs, and Wells

There are many kinds of magical lakes, springs, and wells in Celtic myth. Some might be placed on magical islands, and others might be in other sa-

cred or hard-to-find places, like on mountain tops or deep in impenetrable forests. Magical lakes, springs, and wells may be generated randomly from the following table; to determine whether a site is a lake, spring, or well, roll 1d6: 1 = lake, 2-4 = spring, 5-6 = well.

**Table 9: Magical Effects**

Die Roll	Site Type
1-2	Divination
3-5	Healing
6-7	Immersion
8-10	Magical Cleansing
11-12	Petrifying
13-14	Potion
15	Rainmaking
16-18	Scrying
19-20	DM's choice

**Divination.** The waters are inhabited by some invisible, indetectable being which may be persuaded to act as an oracle. Some kind of offering or other inducement may be necessary; this is for the DM to decide. The oracle will answer questions just as though an *augury* spell had been cast.

**Healing.** The waters of this place have the effect of a *potion of healing* when drunk, and all diseases and poisons magically disappear when the afflicted area is bathed in the water.

**Immersion.** The waters have a magical effect on any creature which bathes in them. This effect is like that of a magical potion. The waters lose their potency when removed; a barrel of water taken away from the site is just plain water. Roll on the following table to discover the water's nature:

**Table 9a: Immersion Effects**

Die Roll	Potion Type
1-2	Diminution
3	Fire Resistance
4	Flying
5-6	Growth
7-10	Invisibility
11	Invulnerability
12	Levitation
13	Oil of Acid Resistance
14-15	Oil of Timelessness
16-17	Poison
18	Polymorph Self
19-20	DM's choice

**Magical Cleansing.** Bathing in the waters re-



moves any and all magical effects from the character, including curses, magically inflicted wounds (i.e., from *cause light wounds* and similar spells, but not from magical weapons or offensive spells like *fireball*) or diseases, enchantments, and any other magical effects whatsoever. Magical items dropped in the waters must successfully save vs. acid or be completely destroyed.

**Petrifying.** Anything immersed in the water is instantly turned to stone. Living creatures are permitted a saving throw vs. petrification to avoid the effects.

**Potion.** The waters have the effect of a magical potion when drunk. When removed from the site, however, the water loses its magical potency; a flask filled at the site and taken away will contain ordinary water. Roll on the following table to determine the water's effect:

**Table 9b: Potion Effects**

Die Roll	Potion Type
1	<i>Clairaudience</i>
2	<i>Clairvoyance</i>
3	<i>Delusion</i>
4	<i>Elixir of Health</i>
5	<i>Elixir of Madness</i>
6	<i>Elixir of Youth</i>
7	<i>ESP</i>
8	<i>Giant Strength</i>
9	<i>Heroism</i>
10	<i>Longevity</i>
11	<i>Philter of Glibness</i>
12	<i>Philter of Love</i>
13	<i>Philter of Persuasiveness</i>
14	<i>Philter of Stammering and Stuttering</i>
15	<i>Poison</i>
16	<i>Super-heroism</i>
17	<i>Vitality</i>
18	<i>Water Breathing</i>
19-20	DM's choice

**Rainmaking.** If a handful of water from this place is thrown into the air, it causes torrential rains over a 1-mile radius for 15 minutes. This property remains in the water for one year after it is taken away from the site.

**Scrying.** The water from this site can be used for scrying as if it is a magical *crystal ball*. A bowl of water retains this property for one day after being taken from the lake, well, or spring.

## Magical Fortresses

Typical Celtic fortresses are discussed in Chapter 7, and magical fortresses are good bases for powerful NPCs. Use the following table to generate magical fortresses randomly.

**Table 10: Magical Fortresses**

### Dice Roll Fortress Type

1-4	Enchanting
5-6	Invisible
7-11	Moving
12-13	Peaceful
14-16	Timeless
17-18	Truthful
19-20	DM's choice

**Enchanting.** This type of fortress is always magnificent, with a glittering court and constant feasting. Anyone who sets foot in this fortress must roll a successful saving throw vs. spells or become completely enchanted with the place. An enchanted character will absolutely refuse to leave under any circumstances. The enchantment is broken if an enchanted character leaves the fortress, but characters will normally need to be tricked or overpowered into doing so.

**Invisible.** The fortress is invisible to those outside it, although it can be seen by characters with the ability to see invisible objects.

**Moving.** The fortress moves from time to time (see the notes on moving islands). It is common for powerful evil NPCs like enchanters and witches to make their lairs in such fortresses, and some can control the movements of the fortress by their magic.

**Peaceful.** The fortress has a magical aura which makes violence and discord of any kind almost impossible. The aura is equivalent to a *mass charm* spell, and only those who roll successful saving throws vs. spells against the charm may do anything violent or aggressive.

**Truthful.** The fortress has a magical aura which makes lying or deceit of any kind almost impossible. The aura is equivalent to a *mass charm* spell, and only those who roll successful saving throws vs. spells against the charm may speak anything but the truth or take any deceitful action—this includes the casting of illusions and similar spells.

**Timeless.** Time does not exactly stand still in the fortress, but it passes much slower than in the rest of the world. A day here is a year for the rest of the world. Timeless fortresses have a 65% chance of



also being Enchanting.

## Hidden Magical Places

Magical places in Celtic Myth are never easy to find, and many are protected in various ways so that only the worthy can use their magic. It is 95% likely that a randomly-generated magical place will be hidden or protected. Roll on the following table to determine the nature of the protection:

**Table 11: Magical Place Protection**  
**Dice Roll Protection**

1-5	Hidden
6-9	Selective
10-11	Mobile
12-15	Monster
16-17	Occasional
18	Quest
19	Sidhe
20	DM's choice

**Hidden.** The site is magically concealed and can only be found by a certain type of person. Others will be magically directed around the site and unable to find it; however, they may be led to the site by someone who is able to find it. Roll on the following table:

**Table 11a: Locatable Places**

**Die Roll Allowed**

1-2	Good aligned creatures
3-10	Non-evil aligned creatures
11-14	Creatures reduced to 10% or fewer hit points
15-16	Druids
17	Sidhe
18	Characters with Sidhe blood
19	Characters without fomorian blood
20	DM's choice

**Selective.** The site can be found by anyone, but its magic only works for a certain type of creature. Roll on the table for Hidden sites above to determine the type of creature. This protection is most appropriate for lakes, wells, and springs, but may also apply to certain kinds of magical islands if the DM wishes.

**Mobile.** The site moves from time to time (see the notes on moving islands), and never appears in the same place twice.

**Monster.** A monster (DM's choice) lairs in or

near the site, and must be overcome or avoided in order to reach it. If the monster is killed, there is a 75% chance that it will be fully restored by the next dawn to continue guarding the site. If this does not happen, there is a 30% chance that a stronger monster will appear to guard the site.

**Occasional.** The site does not exist all the time, although it always appears in the same place. There is a 50% chance that the site's appearances are random, and a 50% chance that they are regular. Regular appearances might be tied into the seasons (e.g., the first day of spring, summer, autumn, or winter, or the summer or winter solstice), or the phases of the moon (e.g., the night of the full moon or new moon), or some other regular occurrence (e.g., the anniversary of a great event such as a battle or the birth or death of a great hero).

**Quest.** The site may only be found and used by those who have vowed to undertake a quest in exchange for the privilege. The nature of the quest is up to the DM; those who break their word and do not immediately set out on the quest will lose all benefits gained from visiting the site and may suffer a curse as well.

**Sidhe.** The site is in the lands of the Sidhe, and they must be persuaded to permit access to it.

## Stone Circles

Standing stones are discussed in the AD&D® 2nd Edition *Legends & Lore* rulebook. Archaeology has proven that standing stones and stone circles were actually erected by pre-Celtic European peoples, so for a historically-accurate campaign, the DM may prefer to disregard these rules.

However, these sites were certainly known to the Celts, who did believe that they had some magical power. It is not stretching history (or historical fantasy) too far to suppose that the druids had found a way to use the power of the standing stones. Therefore, the DM may rule that druids and other Celtic spellcasters might be able to use the power of the standing stones, but that they are unable to create new ones—the secret of their construction having died with their original builders.

Alternatively, perhaps the secret of making standing stones is still alive, but known only to an earlier race like the Sidhe or the firbolg.

Of course, the DM is the final arbiter of what is and is not permitted in a campaign, and those who wish to use the full rules for standing stones as given in *Legends & Lore* are perfectly welcome to do so.



## Monsters

## 5

The Celtic lands were home to more than just humans. Many of the most popular creatures of western European folklore started in Celtic superstition. There were giants, elves, sprites, merfolk, and dragons, although some of their names have changed a little over the centuries. There were also less familiar creatures, like the phouka, water-horse, and others.

### The Role of Monsters

Before throwing dragons, giants, and hordes of other creatures at player characters, take a little time to consider the place of monsters in a Celtic campaign. As mentioned, The Celts saw their world very differently from the world which is found in the typical AD&D® campaign. To get the most out of the historical fantasy adventuring experience, these differences should be taken into account.

Although the Celts believed in the existence of the monsters described in this chapter, they were not so much a part of everyday life as they are in most fantasy realms. The world is essentially a human world; even the Sidhe are very human-like, and difficult to tell apart from humans by their appearance alone. There are no dwarven citadels or elven tree-cities; halflings, gnomes, dwarves, and elves do not routinely walk among humans. Characters who have dealings with nonhumans will treasure the experience, and tell the tale to their children and grandchildren.

Because nonhumans and other monsters are so rarely seen, humans generally react to them in one of two ways. The first is fear—the creatures are an unknown quantity, and much of a human's meager knowledge of them might come from having been scared to sleep as a child by tales of them. Many races will be the survivors of previous Invasions (see Chapter 8), and their kin may well have fought long and bitter wars with humans. No matter how pleasant or helpful a nonhuman creature might be, it will always be viewed with suspicion and fear. Most people will want to avoid them if possible, and keep contact to a minimum.

The second reaction, often combined with fear, is awe. Nonhumans have an otherworldly quality about them, and are sometimes associated with the afterlife in legend. They know more about the world, the gods, the spirits, and other things than humans can ever learn. They may have immense powers, and interfering with them can leave a

character cursed for life—and sometimes his descendants, too.

Only a true hero or a fool would treat supernatural creatures with casual disregard. For all others, the news that Sidhe have been seen in the woods or a water-horse has moved into the lake is a matter of grave importance.

### Existing Creatures

The AD&D game system, with its rich supply of monsters, has drawn upon Celtic tradition as well as the folklore and mythology of many other historical cultures.

Several creatures appearing in the various parts of the *Monstrous Compendium* are either Celtic in origin or so close to creatures from Celtic folklore that only a change of name is necessary. There are many others which require only a slight adjustment (a change to AC or HD, for example), and these are presented in note form after the list of "unchanged" monsters. The standard AD&D game name is in parentheses after the Celtic name.

The third part of this chapter consists of a discussion of Sidhe (elves) and fomorians and firbolg (giant-kin). These creatures play major roles in Celtic myth, and are dealt with in greater detail than other creatures.

This chapter concludes with descriptions of a few all-new creatures, with complete monster descriptions and statistics in the standard *Monstrous Compendium* format.

### Existing Monsters

*Monstrous Compendium, Volume 1*

Herd Animal, cattle

Herd Animal, sheep

Bat, common

Bat, large

Bat, huge

Bear, brown

Bear, cave

Boar, wild

Boar, giant

Cat, Great, giant lynx

Dog, war

Giant, Hill

Giant, Stone

Hornet/Wasp, giant

Horse, pony

Horse, wild

Horse, riding



Korred  
Ogre and Merrow  
Owl  
Rat, common  
Rat, giant  
Selkie  
Snake, constrictor, normal\*  
Snake, constrictor, giant\*.  
Snake, poison, normal\*  
Snake, poison, giant\*  
Snake, sea, giant  
Spider, large\*  
Spider, huge\*  
Spider, giant\*  
Spider, giant water\*  
Spider, giant marine\*  
Toad, giant\*  
Toad, poisonous\*  
Will O'Wisp  
Wolf, normal  
Wolf, dire  
Wyvern

*Monstrous Compendium, Volume 2*

Badger  
Beetle, Giant, any  
Crustacean, Giant, any  
Dolphin  
Eagle, Wild and Giant  
Ettin  
Fish, Giant, Gar and Pike  
Frog, Giant\*  
Frog, Killer\*  
Frog, Poisonous\*  
Giant-kin, Cyclops  
Hag, any  
Hawk, Large and Small  
Killmoulis\*  
Lamprey, Normal and Giant  
Leech, Swarm and Giant  
Mold, any  
Pixie  
Plant, Carnivorous, Strangleweed  
Weasel, Wild and Giant  
Whale, Common and Killer

\* These creatures were reputedly banished from Ireland by St. Patrick, and will not be found in Ireland after the mid-5th century A.D.

#### Afanc (Behir)

The afanc is a lake-dwelling subspecies of the be-

hir, native to Wales. It has no lightning discharge, and has a swimming movement rate of 12. Its bite is its only attack.

#### Asrai (Nixie)

Asrai do not have the charm ability of nixies, and seem to have no interest in enslaving humans. For the most part, they seem to prefer to leave humans alone and be left alone in return.

Asrai cannot stay out of water for long, and being out of water is very painful for them. Each round an asrai is completely out of fresh water, it suffers 1 point of damage; when it is killed, nothing remains but a small pool of water.

The skin of an asrai is very cold to the touch, and a human who touches or is touched by an asrai suffers 1d4 points of cold damage.

Asrai speak only their own language. Their tribes are smaller than nixie tribes, consisting of extended family groups of 1d8 + 8 individuals.

#### Banshee (Groaning Spirit)

In the Celtic world, the banshee is not the spirit of an evil female elf, but of a human woman—often one who has died in childbirth or before her time. They often haunt a single family or bloodline, keening when someone in that family is about to die or causing the deaths themselves. A family or individual may become haunted by a banshee as the result of a powerful curse or great misdeed.

Undead are very rare in the Celtic world, and the banshee is the only common example. Druids can attempt to turn banshees as though they were clerics of the same level.

#### Baobhan Sith (Vampire)

The baobhan sith (pronounced bavaan shee) is not to be confused with the banshee. This Celtic vampire is invariably female, and is found mainly in the highlands of Scotland and similar mountainous and remote areas.

The baobhan sith has no life energy draining ability, and cannot regenerate, shape change, spider climb, or assume gaseous form. They are unaffected by running water, garlic, and mirrors. They prefer to be out on the wild, rugged hillsides, and seldom frequent human settlements. They prey mainly on travelers and shepherds, using their charm to induce victims to dance with them. As they dance, they absorb the blood of their victims directly through the skin, rather than by biting. Their victims are dead forever; they cannot be



brought back to life by any magic except a *wish* spell, and do not themselves become undead.

#### Beithir (Behir)

The beithir lives mainly in Scotland, and prefers rugged, rocky terrain. It is very rare, and is active mainly in bad weather. Only 5% of beithir have the ability to discharge lightning bolts.

#### Ben-Varrey (Merman)

This tribe of merfolk lives in the waters around the Isle of Man. They are better-disposed toward humans than many other merfolk, although sometimes they cannot resist luring sailors to their death. Female ben-varrey sometimes fall in love with handsome human sailors or fishermen, and try to lure them into the water. The ben-varrey often reward humans who have aided them by giving information on how to find a treasure which has been lost at sea or hidden in a sea-cave. Sometimes ben-varrey will warn fishing-boats to avoid a certain area, and those who ignore the warning lose their tackle and perhaps their lives as well. They may also warn fishermen of impending storms.

#### Brownie

In the Celtic world, brownies are normally invisible and live alongside humans. If well treated, they will perform various domestic tasks by night to help the people of the household where they live. Brownies are normally solitary.

Brownies demand small offerings of food and drink, to be left out where they can find them. They will be offended if anyone names them out loud, thanks them for their help, or leaves anything for them except a small amount of food and drink. An offended brownie leaves the house for more agreeable lodgings and never returns.

#### Cu Sidhe, Cwn Annwn (Dog)

The Sidhe have their own animals, which are similar to mortal animals. They are normally distinguishable by being pure white, often with red ears. Sidhe hounds are known as cu Sidhe in Ireland, cu sith in Scotland and cwn annwn in Wales. They vary from the size of a large dog to the size of a yearling bullock; the smaller ones have 2 + 2 HD and the larger ones as much as 4 + 4, but otherwise they are much the same as war dogs. Cu Sidhe can follow any trail under any circumstances, and suffer no movement penalties for terrain. Sidhe encountered hunting will have 4d4 cu Sidhe.

#### Dragon

Dragons are very rare in Celtic myth. They can be of various colors, but all have a flame breath weapon like the red dragon. None can use spells, and nearly all have only animal intelligence. The appearance of a dragon is normally a portent of great evil in the Celtic world, sometimes caused by a foolish adventurer waking a sleeping dragon, and sometimes caused by some evil or divine power.

#### Fenette (Nixie)

Also known as Dracae, these creatures inhabit the larger rivers of Gaul. They are adept shape-changers, and can transform themselves at will into young women, fish, or mermaids. In human form, their eyes are green and they always dress in white; they can be recognized by the fact that the edges of their garments are always damp.

Fenetts have no charm ability, but use their shapeshifting ability to lure victims under water. They will float down the river in the form of gold rings or other valuable objects, and anyone who reaches for them is dragged into the water and enslaved. They prefer to kidnap human women, to act as nursemaids for their own young, and sometimes they will kidnap young men for sport. They are able to cast *water breathing* spells in the same way as nixies.

#### Gwragedd Annwn (Swanmay)

In Welsh tradition, the gwragedd annwn (pronounced gooraggeth annoon) may marry human men of good alignment, if they consider them worthy. The offspring of such marriages are human in every way, and have no shapeshifting ability; however, they gain the proficiencies of healing and herbalism with no proficiency slots.

#### Korrigan (Nymph)

Korrigans are female korred, and live by springs in the Atlantic west of Gaul, now called Brittany. They are quite unlike their male counterparts in appearance, and are perfectly beautiful human-looking women about two feet tall. They have long, flowing hair, which they comb every night with golden combs as they sit by their springs, which are often close to standing stones.

A male character who sees a korrigan bathing (and is caught) must marry her within three days and go to live among the korred. Those who refuse will earn the enmity of every korred they meet for



dishonoring their kinswoman; this can have fatal consequences. Korrigans are said to be related to the most ancient druids of Gaul, and have the same druidical spell use as nymphs, although they cannot use the *dimension door* spell.

Korrigans speak the same languages as korred but also have a 25% chance of speaking the druidical tongue.

#### Lamignac (Nymph/Sprite)

The lamignacs inhabit springs in the mountains and hills of southern Gaul, living in richly decorated underground grottoes. At night, they come above ground to comb their hair and bathe. They sing as they do so, and the sound can carry for some distance, as all the animals within earshot are hushed and listening.

Lamignacs are well-proportioned and beautiful human-looking women, 2 to 3 feet tall. A male character who catches sight of a lamignac bathing is not killed instantly, but may have to face the wrath of her male relatives. These beings are handsome-looking miniature human men, with the statistics and abilities of wingless sprites. They can cast a *bestow curse* spell on a mortal who angers them.

At the full of the moon, lamignacs perform rituals at their springs which turn the waters into po-

tions of super-healing. The waters remain magical until struck by sunlight, so they will last indefinitely if kept in an opaque container.

Lamignacs speak the languages of nymphs and korred, but have a habit of saying the opposite of what a human would say. When a lamignac predicts bad weather, for instance, one can look forward to a week of clear skies and sunshine.

#### Leprechaun

Strictly speaking, leprechauns entered Irish folklore some time after the period covered by this book, although a DM might decide to allow them in an Irish-based campaign. Some scholars suggest that they are a degenerate branch of the Sidhe.

#### Lycanthropes

Celtic lore is full of shape-changers who are very much like the lycanthropes listed in the *Monstrous Compendium* volumes. However, these Celtic lycanthropes may be wounded by normal weapons and suffer no additional damage from silver. Further, their shapechanging is not affected by the phases of the moon. Werebears, wereboars, werefoxes, and wererats are all appropriate for a Celtic campaign; werefoxes do not always have a charm ability, although any lycanthrope may also be a spellcaster.



### Nuckelavee (Centaur)

The Nuckelavee is an evil marine centaur that inhabits the seas around the Scottish Isles. Its main body is like a blend of horse and killer whale, with hooves, fins, and an enormous mouth. Rising from the back of the main body is a human-like torso, with a huge, misshapen, one-eyed head. The monster has no skin, and the clearly visible muscle-cords, tendons, and blood vessels increase the horror of its appearance.

The nuckelavee is fully amphibious, with a swim rate of 9. It cannot cross fresh water, however, and running fresh water has the same effect on it as on a vampire. It attacks with its claws, which rend for 1d6 damage each, and bites with the huge mouth in its main body, causing 2d6 damage. If both claws hit, the victim is bitten automatically.

### The Sidhe

The Sidhe have various names in various parts of the Celtic world. In Ireland and Scotland they are *Sidhe*, *sith* and *si* (all pronounced "shee"); in Wales they are *plant annwn* ("plant annoon") and *tylwth teg* ("tillooth teg"), and in France their Gaulish names have given way to French ones in the post-Celtic years (*fees* and *dames vertes*). In England they are called elves and faeries.

Wherever they are found, the Sidhe are the remnants of a proud pre-Celtic race. They are skilled in magic and in all the arts and crafts and once ruled much of Europe before the rise of Celtic and Germanic peoples. Now, however, they are in decline, and have increasingly less to do with the mortal world. They still have their own realm—called *Sidhe*, *annwn* or *faerie*—but it only touches the world of mortals at certain points. Some ancient burial mounds are entrances to this otherworld, and so are some hidden glades in the deepest forests. It is whispered that the bulk of the Sidhe have taken themselves to *Tir Nan Og*, the Land of the Young, which lies west across the sea. Chapter 8 contains further descriptions of these lands.

Although the legends of the Sidhe (known as *alven* or *alfar* to the Germanic peoples of northern Europe) have had a great influence on the elven race in the AD&D® game, the two are not identical. The following notes cover the important differences.

### Appearance

The Sidhe are very human-like in appearance.

They tend to be tall, fair, and lithe rather than massively built, but they can still be mistaken for beautiful humans. Their ears may be slightly pointed but are not excessively so. Their dress and equipment are very similar to those of Celtic humans but is always of the most magnificent quality and beauty.

### Ability Scores

Sidhe always have a Charisma score of at least 16, and Intelligence and Dexterity are always at least 12. Other ability scores are in the same range as those of humans, although many Sidhe are incredibly old by human standards and may have above-average Wisdom scores as a result.

### Age and Life-span

The Sidhe can live for thousands of years, and like the elves described in the *Player's Handbook*, they seem not to die of old age. Rather, after about 1,000 years, they seem to become disenchanted with the Celtic world—perhaps it is too dispiriting to see how their realm there has shrunk in that time—and many withdraw to *Tir Nan Og* (see p. 91). Treat Sidhe as elves when addressing age and lifespan.

### Proficiencies and Racial Abilities

The Sidhe have a natural flair for magic, and all are born with the spellcraft proficiency. This does not take up a proficiency slot. Regardless of character class, Sidhe have 4 weapon and 6 nonweapon proficiency slots at 1st level, and gain one more of each every 2 levels thereafter. The non-proficiency penalty for weapons is -2.

The Sidhe have their own language, and may learn any other language they please. Most speak the local human dialects.

Sidhe do not have the elven immunity to *sleep*- and *charm*-related spells. However, they do have a bonus to all saving throws against magic of any kind; this bonus is +1 at 1st level and increases by +1 per 3 levels, becoming +2 at 3rd level, +3 at 6th level, +4 at 9th level, and so on. This bonus is cumulative with all other saving throw modifiers arising from ability scores, magical protection, and other circumstances.

Sidhe always make saving throws as wizards, regardless of their actual character class.

The Sidhe do not have any bonuses with specific weapons, although it is common for them to special-



ize in one or more weapons, typically longsword, spear, bow, and sling. A Sidhe can specialize in one weapon per 4 points of Intelligence.

All other elven abilities remain unchanged.

## Alignment

Most Sidhe are neutral, and they tend to be chaotic rather than lawful. Very few Sidhe are evil.

## Character Classes

The majority of Sidhe are rangers, with all the abilities of rangers. Enemy species are normally firbolg or fomorians; some individuals have been known to choose humans as their enemy, but this is rare. Sidhe rangers can learn the same spells as human druids (see p. 32). Followers are always Sidhe; use the **Celtic Followers Table** (p. 19) to determine numbers and equipment.

Sidhe can also be multi-classed ranger/mages, just like humans who are born with the character gift of magical affinity (see p. 15).

Sidhe bards are reputed to be the best in the world, and gain a +1 bonus to all rolls involving music and poetry. Sidhe can be multi-classed as bard/mages.

Both Sidhe rangers and Sidhe fighter/mages can cast spells while wearing scale mail or lighter armor with no penalties. Bards and bard/mages may do so with studded leather or lighter armor.

## Society

The Sidhe are organized in much the same way as Celtic humans, with noble leaders commanding a retinue of warriors, craftspeople, and others. They tend not to fight among themselves as much as Celtic humans, but inter-Sidhe conflicts are bitter affairs when they occur. It is not unknown for one side or the other to seek human assistance in such conflicts, promising aid or magical gifts in return.

## Sidhe Types

Humans tend to classify Sidhe according to their dealings with them, seeing sub-races when in fact there were only differences in attitude or circumstances. The following are human names given to Sidhe under particular circumstances.

**Dames Vertes.** Groups of young female Sidhe sometimes encounter humans in forests and other remote settings, although like most Sidhe they prefer to avoid encounters under most circumstances.

However, when a high-spirited group of Sidhe maidens encounters a likely-looking group of human males, they may decide to have some fun. They delight in leading their victims along a merry chase through the woods, getting them thoroughly lost and sometimes frightening them by almost leading them over cliffs or into other hazards. They nearly always manage to melt into the forest without getting caught. Any human who catches a dame verte had better treat her with respect, for—no matter what the provocation—any mistreatment will surely bring down the wrath of her kindred upon him.

**Daoine Sidhe** ("theena shee"). This is the most common term used for the Sidhe, especially when dealings with them have been friendly.

**Fool.** It has already been noted that some Sidhe rangers may choose humans as their enemy species. A fool is a solitary Sidhe, sometimes a renegade, who victimizes humans. His attacks are not often fatal—mostly they are designed to humiliate the human victims and prove the superiority of the Sidhe. The term "fool" seems to come from the fact that their attacks are usually no more than vicious practical jokes. A fool may appear in front of a group of humans, reciting insulting verses, and by agility and magic remain untouched by their attacks; he may try to break their weapons magically, cause them to stumble, and so on. The best-known fool in Celtic myth is Adamnan of the Irish Sidhe; it is said that to meet him is like being imprisoned forever.

**Ganconer.** Young male Sidhe may dally with human maids that they meet, enjoying the effect that their wit and charm has upon these unsophisticated creatures. After a short while, though, the Sidhe become bored and abandon the young women, often breaking their hearts in the process. Some young girls have been known to pine almost to death as a result of this abandonment.

**Leanan Sidhe** ("lanawn shee"). Occasionally, a female Sidhe will fall in love with a human artist or craftsman. Since both races frown on inter-racial liaisons, the Sidhe woman meets her paramour in secret, and is careful never to be seen by other humans. While the relationship lasts, the human is inspired, producing works of exceptional beauty in a frenzy of activity; food, sleep, and family are forgotten, and sooner or later the physical strain begins to take its toll on his health. At this point the Sidhe woman often withdraws from the relationship, possibly saving her paramour's life but



probably leaving him with a broken heart. Humans often see the leanan Sidhe as a kind of vampire, bewitching the artist into a frenzy and then somehow sucking out the life-energies that are stirred up in the process.

## Fomorians

The fomorians are a race of hideous and evil giants who inhabit the western part of the Celtic world. They were in Ireland even before the first Invasion, and every race which has settled there has had constant trouble with them. Other parts of the Celtic world have stories of isolated groups of creatures which are very much like fomorians in appearance and habits, but the largest concentrations and settlements seem to be in Ireland and the Atlantic coast of Scotland.

The *Monstrous Compendium* contains a description of fomorians under the heading of Giantkin, which is very much in keeping with Irish descriptions of fomorians; the following notes are intended to expand upon this description.

## Appearance and Statistics

Fomorians are always huge and ugly, but these are the only two constants in their appearance.

Some have multiple heads, some have one eye, and other deformities and peculiarities are common. A DM who wants a wide variety of fomorians might include ettins, cyclops, and hill giants in the same monstrous race. Young or small fomorians might be treated as identical to ogres or mongrelmen. Exceptionally intelligent fomorians might be identical to verbeegs.

## Magic

The vast majority of fomorians are far too stupid to have any magic use at all. The most powerful leaders, however, can use druidical magic, specializing in spells which cause harm. Balor, the legendary king of the fomorians, had a single eye which was several feet across; the eyelid was so heavy that Balor needed four servants to raise it for him, but once open the eye had a terrible gaze weapon which could kill or petrify as he chose. Balor was killed in battle against the Tuatha De Danann, but other exceptional fomorians might have similar gifts if the DM so chooses.

If random generation of magical powers is desired, then 1% of all fomorians have spell use, corresponding to the spell use of a druid of level 1d4. Exceptional leaders—5% of the spell-casting types—have spell use as a druid of level 1d4 + 4.



## Habitat/Society

In the ancient days when they fought the various invaders of Ireland, the fomorians were a clannish people, and huge armies of fomorians took the field against the people of Nemed and the Tuatha De Danann. Once the Tuatha De Danann defeated them at the two battles of Moytura, however, the fomorians withdrew from Ireland, returning only to raid and demand tribute.

Isolated groups of fomorians—no more than a couple of dozen to a group—still remain in remote places, and the occasional shipload of raiders still appears to pillage or demand tribute. The tribute they demanded from the Tuatha De Danann was two-thirds of their cattle and two-thirds of their children—for food in both cases.

## Firbolg

The firbolg were the race who conquered Ireland immediately before the Tuatha De Danann and similar peoples were known to inhabit the Celtic world. Like the fomorians, they are described in the *Monstrous Compendium* as giant-kin; again, the notes here are by way of expansion and clarification.

## Combat

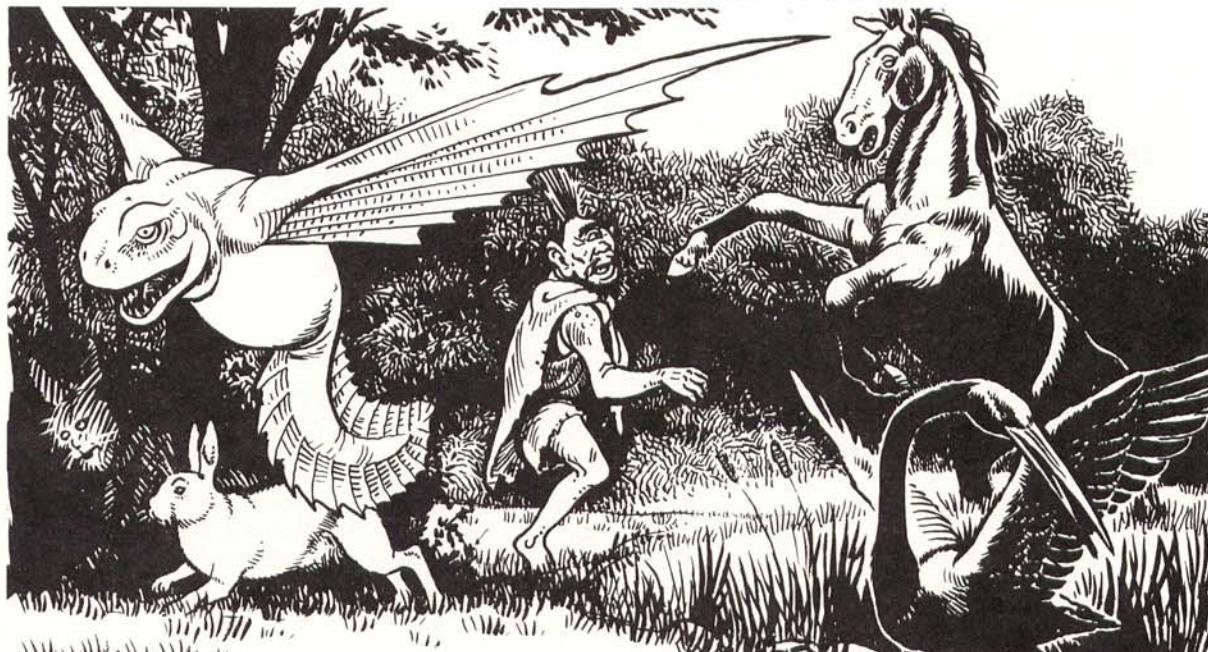
The firbolg use weapons and equipment similar to human warriors (see Chapter 7) but in proportion to their own size. Their weapons and armor are always of very good quality but not quite as lavish as the equipment of the Sidhe. Fir bolg shamans have the same spell use as druids plus major access to the wizard school of Illusion/Phantasm. The firbolg often use illusions to avoid encounters with other races.

## Habitat/Society

The firbolg are reclusive and live deep in forests or far into remote mountain areas. They are polite but cautious in their dealings with other races, and very reluctant to trust. They avoid the Sidhe, and hate the fomorians with a passion, but try to remain on even terms with other non-evil races. Unlike the Sidhe, who have their own half-world adjoining the world of humans, the firbolg live in the mortal world, unseen by almost all humans. Lands belonging to the firbolg are always clear of evil creatures.

## New Monsters

The following creatures are unique to the Celtic lands, and unlike any existing creatures in the *Monstrous Compendium*.





## Boobrie

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate lakes
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	(O, W)
ALIGNMENT:	Nil
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	2, Fl 20, Sw 6
HIT DICE:	4 + 4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d4 or 1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Wing buffet
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (20' wingspan)
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	420

The boobrie is a giant bird, looking much like a loon or northern diver which has grown to the size of a man. It is completely black in color. It haunts the lakesides of western Scotland and supplements its diet of fish by devouring lambs and calves that stray too close to the waterside. It has been known to wait in ambush in the reeds by the side of a lake and attack anything the size of a sheep or smaller—including young children—which wanders within reach. Its call is harsh and loud and can carry for several miles.

**Combat:** The boobrie attacks with its 2-foot beak, and can also rear up to deliver a wing-buffet once every three rounds. The wing-buffet automatically hits any creature directly in front of the boobrie and not more than 5 feet away. It causes 1d6 damage, and the opponent must make a Dexterity ability check or be knocked down, dropping any hand-held items.

**Habitat/Society:** Boobries inhabit upland lakes in the more remote parts of northern and western Europe. In the spring they form pairs and build nests of floating vegetation which can be up to 20 feet across. They lay 1d4 eggs, and throughout the late spring and early summer they are busy gathering food for their young. Any treasure they have will be in the nest at this time of year, having been brought there on the bodies of human prey.



**Ecology:** Boobries eat fish and any mammals they can catch. They have no natural enemies other than dragons, wyverns, and other such monsters, and humans who often try to kill boobries to protect their livestock.



## Fachan

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate hills, mountains, and rough
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	U (Z)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	by weapon (Strength 18/50)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	270

The fachan is a roughly humanoid creature that haunts the rugged hills and mountains of Scotland. Its appearance is very striking; it has one leg placed centrally under its body, one arm sprouting from the middle of its chest, and one eye in the middle of its face. It has a single tuft of extremely tough hair rising from the top of its head.

Despite only having one leg, the fachan is both quick and agile and makes a formidable opponent. They prefer to ambush lone travelers on the mountains at night or in foul weather but have been known to attack isolated farmsteads for food.

**Combat:** The fachan has a strength of 18/50 and gains a +1 attack bonus and +3 damage bonus when using a weapon. An unarmed fachan can tear with its single claw for 1d6 damage. Fachans use melee weapons such as clubs and axes, preferring brute force over subtlety. Their main tactic is a fast surprise attack, seeking to overwhelm the opponent quickly by sheer force.

**Habitat/Society:** Fachans live in caves and other sheltered places in the wildest and bleakest of hills and mountains. They have also been known to lair in abandoned stone cottages in the mountains, and the temporary huts used by shepherds in upland summer pastures. They are entirely solitary; fa-



chans are only seen together if compelled by some more powerful creature. Nothing is known of their reproductive habits, if any, but they can live indefinitely unless they are killed in combat or by some accident.

**Ecology:** Fachans eat any form of meat and seem to waylay humans principally for food. They also eat any wild animals that they can overcome by force and surprise. They scavenge from carcasses they find on the mountainside but do not set traps for game. They do not alter their environment at all, apart from littering their lairs with bones and debris and any valuables that their victims may have been carrying.



## Phouka

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	varies
MOVEMENT:	varies
HIT DICE:	varies
THAC0:	varies
NO. OF ATTACKS:	varies
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	varies
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	varies
MORALE:	Unsteady (5-7)
XP VALUE:	varies

The phouka is a very strange creature. It seems to have no natural form of its own but can take any shape it pleases at will. It delights in playing tricks on humans, changing into appealing shapes like gold rings and waiting to be picked up. Once picked up, it may abruptly change into a huge rock, a mule, or anything else.

It is also fond of changing into a fine horse and waiting for someone to mount it. It then takes off at breakneck speed, carrying its unfortunate rider over precipitous mountain passes, through gorse and briar hedges, and into all sorts of perilous and frightening situations, before finally depositing the rider in a hedge, pool, or dungheap and cantering off, whinnying with laughter. The rider will suffer no injury except to his pride on these wild rides, as long as he can stay on his wild mount.

The phouka seems to be motivated by its sense of humor rather than any desire to do harm or cause trouble—it loves mischief but does not intentionally cause injury.

**Combat:** Phoukas avoid combat whenever they can, either by turning into something very fast and fleeing or by turning into something very small and hiding. If cornered, a phouka might turn into a huge and frightening monster like a dragon but will always try to flee at the first opportunity. A phouka has all the physical abilities of any creature



it turns into but retains its own intelligence and does not have spellcasting abilities or magical protections in any form.

**Habitat/Society:** Phoukas mainly haunt wild areas but never stray too far from human settlements. They particularly like waiting for victims by the roadside. It is not known how (or whether) phoukas reproduce—various claims have been made but no one has been able to prove that they were observing phoukas and not some other species.

**Ecology:** Phoukas seem to be omnivores. They often turn into goats in order to eat, apparently because goats can eat almost anything. They scavenge and steal rather than hunt.



## Water Horse

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate coasts
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2-4)
TREASURE:	W (Z)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	28, Sw 20
HIT DICE:	5 + 3
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d6, 1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L
MORALE:	Average (8-10)
XP VALUE:	650

The water-horse is an amphibious monster that looks like a beautiful horse of the finest quality. If it can be caught and tamed, it does indeed make a mount which is equal to any natural steed. It is a dangerous thing to mount a water-horse, however.

The water-horse is carnivorous, and will come on land to eat cattle, sheep, and anything else it can catch. It will also allow itself to be mounted, but once a rider is on its back it will bolt straight for the sea, carrying the rider under the waves to be drowned. It can make the skin of its back highly adhesive, so that the rider must make a saving throw vs. rods in order to break free. A ring of free action or similar magical protection will negate the magical adhesion.

**Combat:** A water-horse attacks with a crushing front-hoof trample for 2d6 damage or bites with its sharp teeth for 1d8 damage. It can deliver a double rear-hoof kick for 2d6 damage but cannot do this in the same round as trampling with the front hooves. It suffers no combat penalties for being in water.

**Habitat/Society:** Water-horses are solitary and claim a stretch of coast up to 10 miles long as a territory. Nothing is known of their reproductive habits; they seem to live forever until killed. Male water-horses will occasionally mate with normal mares; the offspring is always a horse of the finest



quality and can command a high price but must be fed on raw meat rather than grass and straw.

**Ecology:** Water-horses have no natural enemies, although they are sometimes hunted down by humans or merfolk when their depredations become intolerable. They can be trained, but if ever a tame water-horse comes within sight of salt water, it will revert to the wild and try to gallop straight in, taking its rider with it.

**Kelpie:** The kelpie of Scottish folklore is a type of water-horse, which has average to high Intelligence (8-14) and the ability to assume human form at will. The human form is that of a shaggy and wild-looking human, and in this form the kelpie may leap onto travelers and try to wrestle them into the water to be devoured. In horse form, the kelpie wears a fine bridle, and if it is somehow taken, the kelpie will beg to have it back and promise almost anything in return—however, it will not hesitate to break any promises if the bridle is returned to it. Most kelpies can speak the local human language and some can speak other languages as well.



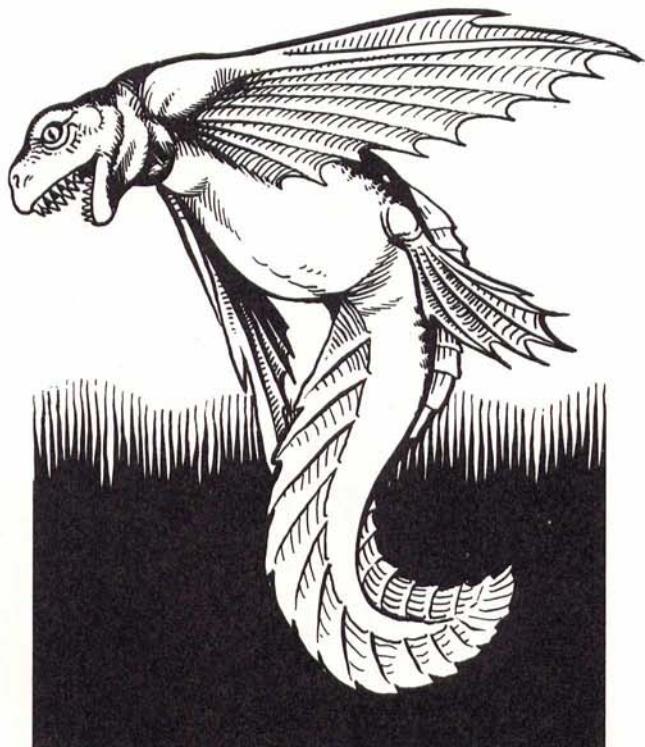
## Water Leaper

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate lakes
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pack
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2-4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral (evil)
NO. APPEARING:	4d6
ARMOR CLASS:	8
MOVEMENT:	Sw 12
HIT DICE:	1-1
THAC0:	20
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Shriek, Leap
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (3' long)
MORALE:	Average (10)
XP VALUE:	65

Water leapers, known as *llamhigyn y dwr* (pronounced "thlamheegin er door") in their native Wales, look something like a large toad with a fishlike tail instead of back legs and a pair of flying-fish style fin-wings instead of front legs. Their broad mouths are full of very sharp teeth. They will attack almost anything and regularly destroy the nets and lines of local fishermen. They also attack swimmers and livestock drinking at the lake's edge.

Water leapers can jump out of the water and glide up to 30 feet using their winglike fins. They have been known to try to knock fishermen out of their boats by deliberately leaping at them. They can also emit a piercing shriek which can startle an unwary fisherman or animal, making their attack easier.

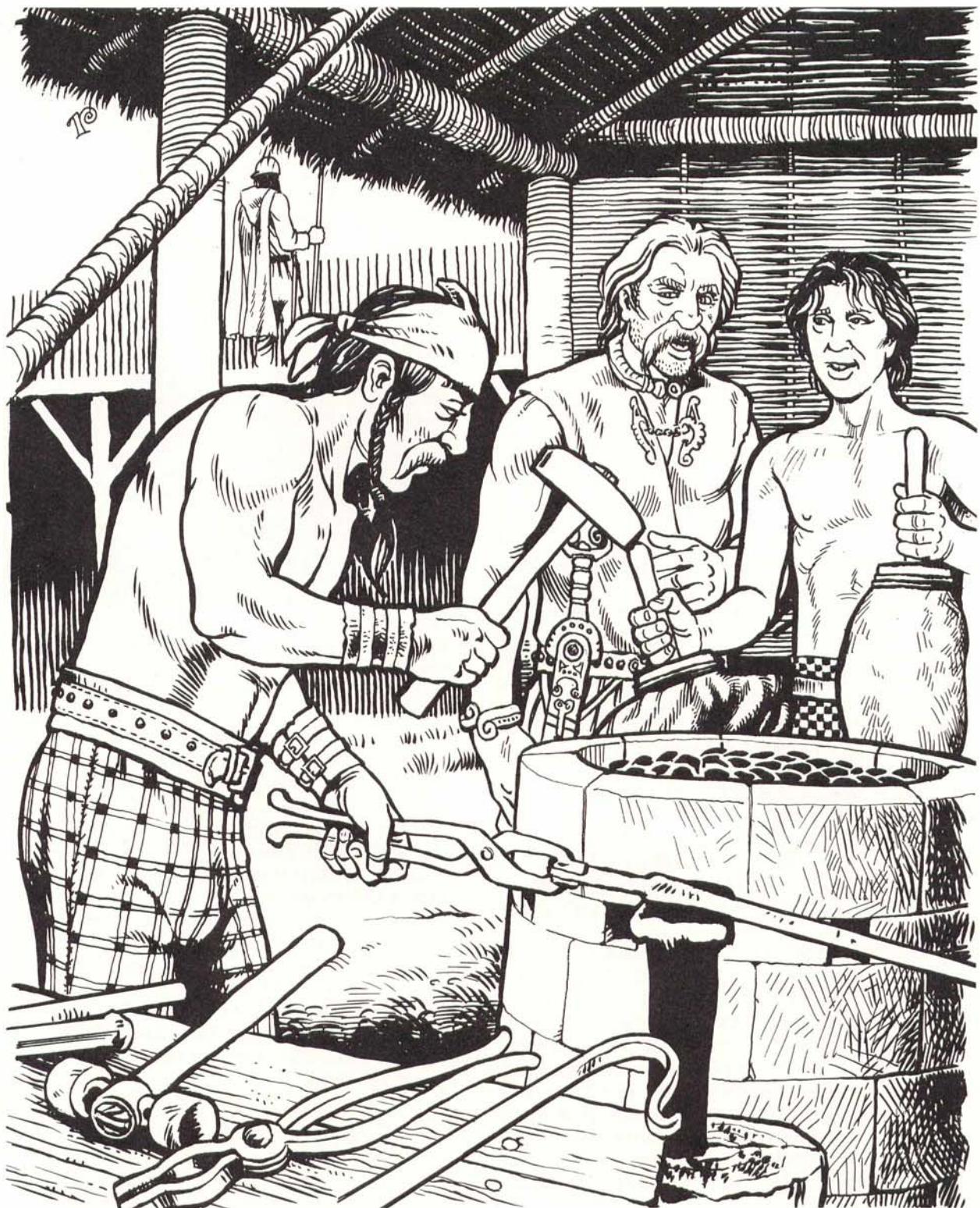
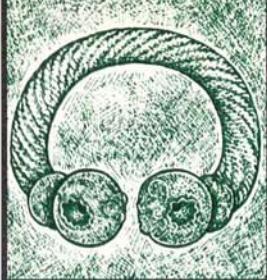
**Combat:** Water leapers attack with their teeth. Up to 12 of the creatures can attack a human-sized victim at the same time. Their leap attack is treated as a normal melee attack, but instead of causing damage, a successful hit forces the victim to roll a successful Dexterity ability check or fall down. Characters sitting in a boat have a +2 bonus to this check, and characters standing up in boats have a -2 penalty. If the boat is a small one, there is a good chance that the character will fall overboard. The water leaper's shriek causes every crea-



ture within 30 yards to roll a successful saving throw vs. Spells or be unable to take any action for the next round. A water leaper may not take any other action in a round when it shrieks.

**Habitat/Society:** Water leapers live in small schools in the lakes of Wales. These schools operate like a wolf pack, showing a rudimentary organization in the hunt. For instance, they will spread out so as to attack a target from all sides at once, and one member may stand a little way off and shriek just as the others are leaping to the attack.

**Ecology:** Water leapers can live on lake fish, but their appetites are so voracious that they quickly deplete the fish stocks in any lake they inhabit. They seem to prefer the meat of sheep, cattle, and humans who wade into the shallows at the lake's edge and will even try to knock victims into the water from bridges and boats. Water leapers have no natural enemies apart from enraged fishermen and deadlier water monsters such as lake worms and water horses.



## Equipment and Treasure

*Gold, silver, corn, cattle, and iron are brought from Britain; also hides, slaves, and highly intelligent hunting dogs.*

—the Roman geographer Strabo, c. A.D. 23

### Trade, Loot, and Gifts

Although the Celts are best known for their violent contact with the great Mediterranean civilizations of Greece and Rome, archaeological evidence proves that natives of the Celtic world spent a lot more time trading than fighting. While heroic merchants do not loom large in the Celtic sagas, the trade networks of the Celtic world were extensive and highly profitable for all concerned. The Classical world was receiving trade-goods from as far afield as Britain and Ireland before the Roman legions had set foot across the Alps, and Greek and Roman goods were traded throughout northern and western Europe, reaching areas which never succumbed to Roman domination.

### Gift-giving

Trade was not the only way to acquire goods—especially luxury goods—in Celtic society. Plunder was important, though it plays small part in the stories of the Celtic heroes. Within Celtic society, perhaps the most socially significant movement of goods was the giving of gifts. A merchant could haggle and trade; a bandit could overpower someone and strip him of his valuables; but it was a true hero who gave magnificent gifts and received fame and loyalty in return.

Leaders gave gifts to their followers to ensure their own good name and their followers' devotion; kings and chieftains gave gifts to each other to cement alliances and maintain friendships. (Even today, people foster alliances and friendships by exchanging gifts at Christmas, on birthdays, and at other significant times.)

Sometimes, gift-giving could turn into a kind of duel, especially where rival chieftains were concerned. Each would try to outdo the other in finding and giving lavish and rare gifts, for whoever gave the greater and rarer gifts would be socially "one up" over the other. This hunger for exotic, expensive novelties, say some scholars, was one of the driving forces behind the extensive trade between the Celtic and Mediterranean worlds in the last few centuries before Christ.

Whole adventures might develop out of this

kind of situation, as the PCs are sent by their leader to find some legendary or fantastic item to match a gift he has just received from a rival chieftain.

### Money

The Celts used various means to settle debts and handle transactions, and not all of them involved money. The main types were barter, cattle, honor debt, and cash.

### Barter

Barter was common in the Celtic world through most of its history. Also known as swapping or trading, barter involves giving one item in exchange for another. For example, a shepherd who wants to try adventuring might offer a smith three sheep in exchange for a sword.

The problem—or some might say, the advantage—of barter is that there are no fixed prices. A deal depends on what economists call "reciprocity of need"—that is, both parties must have something the other wants. Further, each must want what the other is offering enough to give up what they have. The smith might not have a use for three sheep, or he might argue that three sheep are not enough to feed him and his family for the time it would take to make a sword. In a barter system, every deal must be hammered out by haggling, until each side is happy with what they're getting.

### Cattle

In most of the Celtic world, cattle were the true measure of wealth, just as they are in parts of Africa to this day. Large debts between chieftains and other wealthy individuals might be settled in cattle rather than by any other means. In Ireland, the *cumal* was equivalent to seven milking cows, one female slave, or 35 acres of land, while the *set* was equivalent to one milking cow. The precise values varied from time to time, and those given here are the most convenient for game purposes.

The connection between amounts expressed in sets and cumals and amounts expressed in cash was a loose one, but for game purposes the price of a cow can be taken as a link between the two systems. With a milking cow priced at 25 gp, a set is worth 25 gp and a cumal is worth 175 gp.



## Honor Debt

Honor debt was a powerful driving force in Celtic culture, which is further explained in **Chapter 7**. Basically, a debt of honor means that if Fergus does something for Cormac, at some time in the future Cormac will do something for Fergus.

The principle of gift-exchange, described above, sprang out of the idea of honor debt. Chieftains competing to give each other more and more lavish gifts were actually trying to force each other into an honor debt; the chieftain who could not top his rival's latest gift would have to repay the debt in some other way or risk losing honor, and might have to pledge loyalty, promise help in time of war, give up some political advantage, or do something else which he would prefer to avoid.

Honor debt also underlies the gift-giving by which a chieftain earns the loyalty of his followers. Having taken a leader's gold and eaten at his table, a man cannot honorably refuse to fight at his side.

In game terms, players and DM can handle honor debt as they see fit. **Appendix 1** offers a more formal way of handling honor debt and other matters of personal honor.

## Cash

Cash first arose in the ancient world as a means of streamlining transactions. If the smith got paid in gold instead of sheep, he could then trade the gold for sheep, fish, firewood, or whatever else he needed. Instead of sending the shepherd to try and find fish or firewood, or taking the sheep and then trying to trade them himself, the smith simply took cash, which could be exchanged for anything. Cash also meant that, instead of trying to work out a rate of exchange between different goods, people only needed to think about one value—the cash value of what they wanted to buy or sell.

As the Celtic world traded with the Mediterranean world, they naturally came into contact with cash. Just about every kingdom, petty empire, and city-state issued its own coinage at that time, but merchants cared more about the weight of a gold or silver coin than whose head was on it. Although the Celtic economy never became entirely cash-based, several Celtic tribes began to use cash in their trade with the Mediterranean world, and the idea spread.

By the first century B.C., many of the Celtic tribes of Gaul and Britain were minting gold coins called *staters*, based on a Greek design which was

widely used throughout Europe. Staters were small coins, about 11/16" (17mm) in diameter—slightly smaller than a U.S. or British penny. The gold stater is the same size and weight as a standard AD&D® game piece.

The Celts also used silver and copper coins of lower value, but these did not circulate widely outside the fortress-cities known as *oppida* (see p. 75).

Cash was only used in the last couple of centuries B.C., but for the sake of convenience prices are listed here in terms of gold pieces. While this is not strictly historically accurate, it gives a base value for an item which can be used as the basis for bartering in times and places where cash is not used. Certainly it is easier for DM and players if they don't have to calculate everything according to the price of a sheep or cow!

**Table 12: Coins**

Coin Type	Metal	Avg. Weight	Game Equivalent
<i>Celtic Coins</i>			
Stater	gold	1/3 oz	1 GP
Half-Stater	gold	1/6 oz	10 SP
Quarter-Stater	gold	1/12 oz	5 SP
Thaler	silver	1/16 oz	2.5 CP
Speculum	bronze	1/6 oz	1 CP
<i>Mediterranean Coins</i>			
Stater	gold	1/3 oz	1 GP
Aureus	gold	1/3 oz	1 GP
Denarius	silver	1/6 oz	6 CP
As	copper	1/2 oz	3 CP
Sestertius	bronze	1/2 oz	2 CP
Dupondius	bronze	1/3 oz	1.5 CP

The electrum piece and platinum piece have no equivalent in the Celtic world, although electrum was used for jewelry.

**Table 13: Approx. Coin/Weight Conversion**

	Speculum	Stater
Aureus	240	1
Denarius	6	1/24
As	3	1/48
Sestertius	2	1/72
Dupondius	1.5	1/96

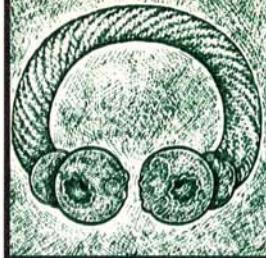
Because coins could vary greatly in weight (and counterfeiting—as well as official debasement of the currency—was rife in the Roman empire!) the



<b>Clothing</b>		Longship	N/A	
Boots, riding	N/A	Sedan chair	N/A	
Sash	N/A	Chariot wheel	10 gp	
Silk Jacket	N/A			
Surcoat	N/A			
Tabard	N/A			
Toga	2 sp*			
Vest	N/A			
<b>Daily Food and Lodging</b>		<b>Miscellaneous Equipment</b>		
Wine (pitcher)	1 gp*	Bolt case	N/A	
Note: rooms and inn lodging were not obtainable in the Celtic world, except in those times and places under Roman rule. The Celtic custom of hospitality is dis- cussed in Chapter 7.)		Cloth, rich	250 gp*	
		Lantern	N/A	
		Lock	N/A**	
		Magnifying glass	N/A*	
		Map or scroll case	N/A*	
		Oil, Greek fire	N/A*	
		Paper	N/A*	
		Papyrus	N/A*	
		Parchment	N/A*	
		Perfume	25gp*	
		Rope, silk	N/A*	
		Signal whistle	N/A	
		Soap	N/A*	
		Spyglass	N/A	
		Tent, lg. or pavilion	N/A*	
		Thieves' picks	50gp**	
		Water clock	250 gp*	
		Writing ink	N/A*	
<b>Household Provisioning</b>		<b>Animals</b>		
Sugar	N/A	Bull	50 gp & up	
Figs (per lb)	10 sp*	Calf	10 gp	
Nuts (per lb)	2 sp	Camel	N/A*	
Raisins (per lb)	10 sp*	Cow, heifer	20 gp	
Rice	N/A	Cow, milking	25 gp	
		Elephant	N/A*	
<b>Tack and Harness</b>		Guinea hen	N/A	
Barding	N/A	Hunting cat	N/A	
Chariot harness	5 gp	Ox	20 gp	
<b>Transport</b>		Peacock	N/A	
Caravel	N/A	<b>Services</b>		
Carriage	N/A	In the Celtic world, specialists		
Chariot	75 gp	were almost never hired to per-		
Chariot, scythe	300 gp	form services on a short-term ba-		
Coaster	N/A	sis. Instead of the prices for serv-		
Drakkar	N/A	ices listed in the <i>Player's</i>		
Dromond	N/A	<i>Handbook</i> p. 68, refer to the rules		
Galleon	N/A	on henchmen and hirelings.		
Great Galley	N/A*			
Knarr	N/A			
		<b>Weapons</b>		
		Arquebus	N/A	
		Battle Axe	N/A*	
		Blowgun	N/A	
		Bow, composite	N/A*	
		Crossbow	N/A	
		Lance, heavy	N/A	
		Lance, jousting	N/A	
		Mancatcher	N/A	
		Polearm (all)	N/A	
		Staff sling	N/A	
		Sword, Bastard	N/A	
		Khopesh	N/A*	
		Scimitar	N/A*	
		Two-handed sword	N/A	
		Trident	N/A	
		Warhammer	N/A	
		<b>Armor</b>		
		Banded mail	N/A*	
		Field Plate	N/A	
		Full Plate	N/A	
		Helmet, great helm	N/A	
		Plate Mail	N/A*	
		Shield, buckler	N/A*	
		<b>New Equipment</b>		
		Anvil	1 gp	
		Cauldron	5 gp	
		Chamfron	30 gp	
		Chariot, scythe	300 gp	
		Firedog, iron	5 gp	
		Gae bolga	25 gp	
		Helmet, crested	30 gp & up	

\*These items were not normally available within the Celtic world, but could be obtained by trade from the Graeco-Roman world or some land in contact with the Mediterranean civilizations. Where prices are not given, the seller will get whatever he can for the item, not going below twice the value listed for the item in the *Player's Handbook*.

\*\*Locks as such were not used in the Celtic world, although some very simple locks came into Gaul and Britian under Roman domination. There is no developed art for picking locks in the Celtic world, but the DM may decide to allow a collection of small saws and blades for breaking and entering. Even so, this kit would have to be imported from the Classical world.



DM can vary the weight and value of coins by as much as 25% whenever he wishes. ("Well, these denarii are a little light. It's going to take 30 of them to make an aureus.") This can affect the listed prices.

## Available Equipment

As noted above, the Celtic world is technologically and culturally different from the standard AD&D® fantasy campaign. Not every item on the Weapon and Equipment lists will be available. Some of it was not invented until the period covered by this book was over. Others were beyond the resources of the Celts and their neighbors, and others still were the products of distant peoples with whom the Celts had no contact. Some items could conceivably be found in the Celtic world, but were extremely rare at best.

In addition, the equipment lists in the *Player's Handbook* do not include some items peculiar to the Celtic world, or give prices which are not appropriate for such items in a Celtic campaign.

The table on the previous page reflects these differences. **Table 14: Equipment** lists those items not found or rarely used in a Celtic campaign. This table is for use with the equipment lists presented in the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. Price adjustments are marked for some items, and any item marked N/A is not available for use in the campaign. Prices are listed in gold pieces for ease of use, but the DM can easily convert prices into staters, ounces of gold, or any other currency he desires.

## Equipment Descriptions

**Anvil:** The anvils used by Celtic smiths were portable, and much smaller than the modern blacksmith's anvil. They looked something like a railroad spike, sometimes with a short bar or lug sticking out of the side. The anvil was hammered into the ground like a fence post, and the lug stopped it sinking further into the ground under the smith's hammering. The top of the anvil was square, and only a little wider than a sword blade.

**Cauldron:** Cauldrons were used for most of the cooking in the Celtic world, and hung on iron chains over the fire at the center of the hut. They looked much like the conventional witches' cauldrons.

**Chamfron:** A chamfron is a piece of horse-armor

consisting of an iron or bronze cap that fit over the top of the horse's head with holes for the ears and eyes. The chamfron improves the horse's AC by 1 against one attack per round, provided that the attack comes from the front rather than the sides or rear.

**Chariot, scythe:** Common in Celtic myth and 20th-century movies, the scythe-chariot was a formidable thing. Sharp blades were fitted to the wheel-hubs, and the sides of the chariot were fitted with rows of metal spikes. Anyone within 2 feet of the chariot as it passes by must roll a successful Dexterity check to get out of the way or suffer 1d6 points of damage from the wheel-blades, and anyone trying to climb into the chariot in a combat situation must roll a successful Dexterity check or suffer 1d4 points of damage from the spikes.

**Firedog:** Iron firedogs, often with animal heads, were used to hold the logs together in the open hearth of a Celtic chief's hall. They became status symbols as well as functional items.

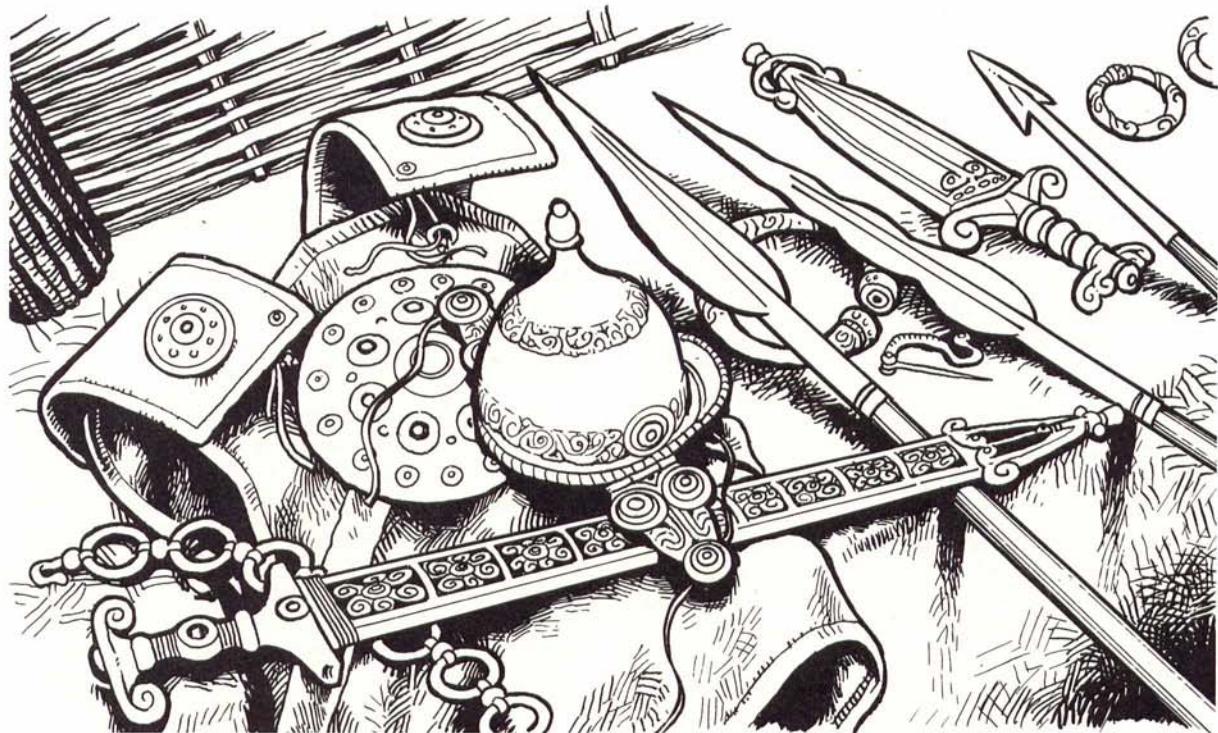
**Gae bolga:** The gae bolga was a barbed spear, and its actual form is debated among scholars and military historians. In the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*, this weapon seems capable of shooting spikes throughout a victim's body, but this may be Celtic exaggeration. Roman historians mention Gauls using spears with barbed, notched, and even spiral heads. The gae bolga is a throwing weapon, and counts as a javelin in all respects. If a successful hit causes 6 or more hp of damage, the barbs have gripped the target, causing 1 additional hit point of damage each round, and the gae bolga impedes the victim as a *slow* spell, with an additional -4 penalty to all Dexterity checks. These effects can only be ended by freeing the victim from the weapon, but if it is pulled out by a character without the healing proficiency, the barbs cause 1d3 additional points of damage.

**Helmet, crested:** Celtic helmets were mostly simple caps of iron or bronze, but leaders and heroes often had their helmets decorated with a crest of some kind. Horns, wings, boars, and birds were all common crests. The cost of a helmet depends on the size and elaboration of the crest and the amount of inlay and other decoration.

## War Gear

*Their swords are as long as spears, and their spears have points as long as swords.*

—Strabo on the Gauls



While Celtic warriors had their choice of a wide range of weaponry and equipment, there were certain favorites. Player characters, of course, are free to equip themselves as their whims and resources dictate, subject to the availability of equipment as discussed on the preceding pages; NPCs will tend to be more uniform in their equipment, reflecting the cultural norm.

### Swords

The Celts' favorite weapon of all was the sword, which in game terms was a long sword with a blade 30-36 inches long and 1½-2 inches wide. Among the Celts of northern Spain, the characteristic form of sword was the falcata, a 2-foot single-edged sword which looks something like a machete with a stabbing point. In game terms, the falcata functions as a broad sword.

Other types of swords were not unknown to the Celts but were rare. Short swords might have been stripped from defeated Romans, and bastard or two-handed swords might have been captured from fomorians or giants. The two-handed claymore, synonymous with the wild highland Scots, was not developed until the Middle Ages. The kh-

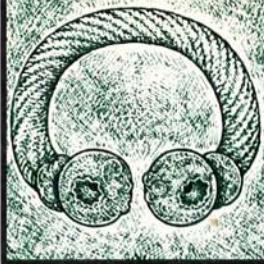
pesh and scimitar are exotic weapons from the Middle East; the Galatians might have encountered them, but such weapons were unknown to the bulk of the Celtic world.

### Spears

Spears were the Celts' second favorite weapon and, according to archaeological evidence, the most commonly used. Although every Celtic warrior would prefer a long sword, not everyone could afford one. Spears fell into two categories: throwing spears (equivalent to javelins in game terms) and fighting spears like the Irish *craisech*. Some spearheads have been found decorated with lavish silver inlays, and many heroes carried spears as well as swords.

### Other Melee Weapons

Apart from daggers, other hand-to-hand combat weapons were comparatively rare in the Celtic world. The Celts used axes as tools, but they were not a popular weapon. A farmer who had no other weapon would take an axe into battle, but anyone who carried an axe onto the battlefield clearly could not afford a "proper" weapon. After the Vi-



kings settled in Ireland in the 9th century A.D., the Irish adopted the axe as a weapon, but in most of the Celtic world axes were regarded primarily as tools.

Maces were very rare, but not unknown. Solid bronze maces have been found dating to the proto-Celtic Unetice culture; scholars have suggested, though, that they were more symbols of office than weapons intended for battle. However, some of the stories of Fionn Mac Cumhail mention some warriors of the fiana using maces.

Clubs were the favored weapons of giants, fomorians, and other brutish creatures but were seldom, if ever, used by human warriors. Like axes, they were not viewed as fit weapons for a warrior. Staves like the quarterstaff are easily made and were probably used for self-defense by travelers and the like, but again, they were not a warrior's weapon, and they were seldom, if ever, used on the battlefield. However, members of the priesthood may well have carried staves, which can be treated as the quarterstaff of the *Player's Handbook*.

Flails and morning stars were never common Celtic weapons. Some are mentioned in the Irish and Welsh stories, but these were first written down in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Before this time, a farmer might have taken an agricultural flail onto the battlefield occasionally, but only if he had no other weapon to use. Fomorians and similar creatures sometimes used immense flails.

Armor-piercing weapons, like the warhammer and military pick, were also rare in the Celtic world. Most warriors had only a helmet and shield, so specialized anti-armor weapons were unnecessary and did not develop until the Middle Ages. However, picks and hammers were certainly used as tools and could be used as weapons if nothing else was close at hand. Like clubs and flails, hammers are suitable weapons for fomorians, giants, and the like.

## Missile Weapons

The main missile weapons of the Celts were javelins and slings. Bows were used for hunting—the classic medieval longbow was perfected as early as the Neolithic period, long before the Celts expanded across Europe—but were seldom seen in battle until the post-Roman period.

The sling used by the Celts was a simple loop of rope or leather used to fire smooth pebbles. The Romans used specially-cast lead sling bullets, and

some Celtic peoples may have taken the idea from them. In both cases, the weight of a projectile was seldom more than a couple of ounces.

Some Irish sagas—notably the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*—mention darts being used as weapons. It is not clear whether the term refers to darts in the sense used by the *Player's Handbook*, or whether it is simply an alternative name for a light javelin. There have been no archaeological finds of darts in the Celtic world. The DM should decide which meaning to use in his campaign.

## Armor

Although the majority of Celtic warriors were unarmored, a wide range of armor was available to those who could afford it. Most armor consisted of a leather jerkin, sometimes reinforced with metal, wood or bone plates, studs, scales, or rings. In game terms, this covers brigandine, hide, leather, ring mail, scale mail, splint mail, and studded leather. Banded mail would exist almost entirely as captured Roman legionary armor, and chain mail was almost unknown in the Celtic world until the post-Roman period.

## Helmets

The Celtic warrior's main protection was a helmet and shield. Helmets were simple caps of iron or leather reinforced with iron and could be elaborately decorated with crests, wings, horns, and the like. The horned helmets so beloved of fantasy barbarians started with the Celts.

## Shields

Celtic shields were normally rectangular with rounded corners, and covered an area from neck to knee. Some smaller shields have been found, but these were probably made specifically as offerings to the river-spirits and never intended for actual use. In game terms, Celtic shields are considered medium in size.

Shields were usually made of wood or stiffened leather, although some wicker shields are mentioned in Irish stories. There was normally an iron or bronze shield-boss at the center, to protect the shield hand from penetrating blows. Wooden and wicker shields could be faced with leather or bronze; a bronze shield-facing was a luxury and was often lavishly decorated.

Circular shields were not unknown in the Celtic



world, but were rarer and less characteristically Celtic. They were of similar construction to the rectangular shields and are considered medium shields. The Irish hero Cu Chulainn is said to have had a special shield for performing the feat of the shield-rim; it is possible that this was a small or medium circular shield, with a sharpened metal rim.

## Treasure

Since the Celts did not have a coin-based economy, the treasure hoards which characters may find in their adventures will seldom be convenient sacks of gold and silver coins. Part of a treasure may be in Roman, Greek, or Gallo-British coinage, but in a large hoard the bulk of the treasure will consist of jewelry, decorated weapons and armor, and other items whose value comes from their craftsmanship rather than their material. Cups, drinking horns, fine cloth, imported wine, decorative chariot-fittings, cauldrons, and the like all represent treasure in the Celtic world.

The list below gives some idea of the many forms which these treasure items can take. No monetary value is assigned to any of them, for two reasons. First, it is almost impossible to do anything but guess about their actual value to their Celtic owners. Second, value depends on workmanship far more than on form. A gold bracelet made by a master goldsmith might be worth ten times the value of one made by his apprentice, even though both are the same size and contain the same amount of gold.

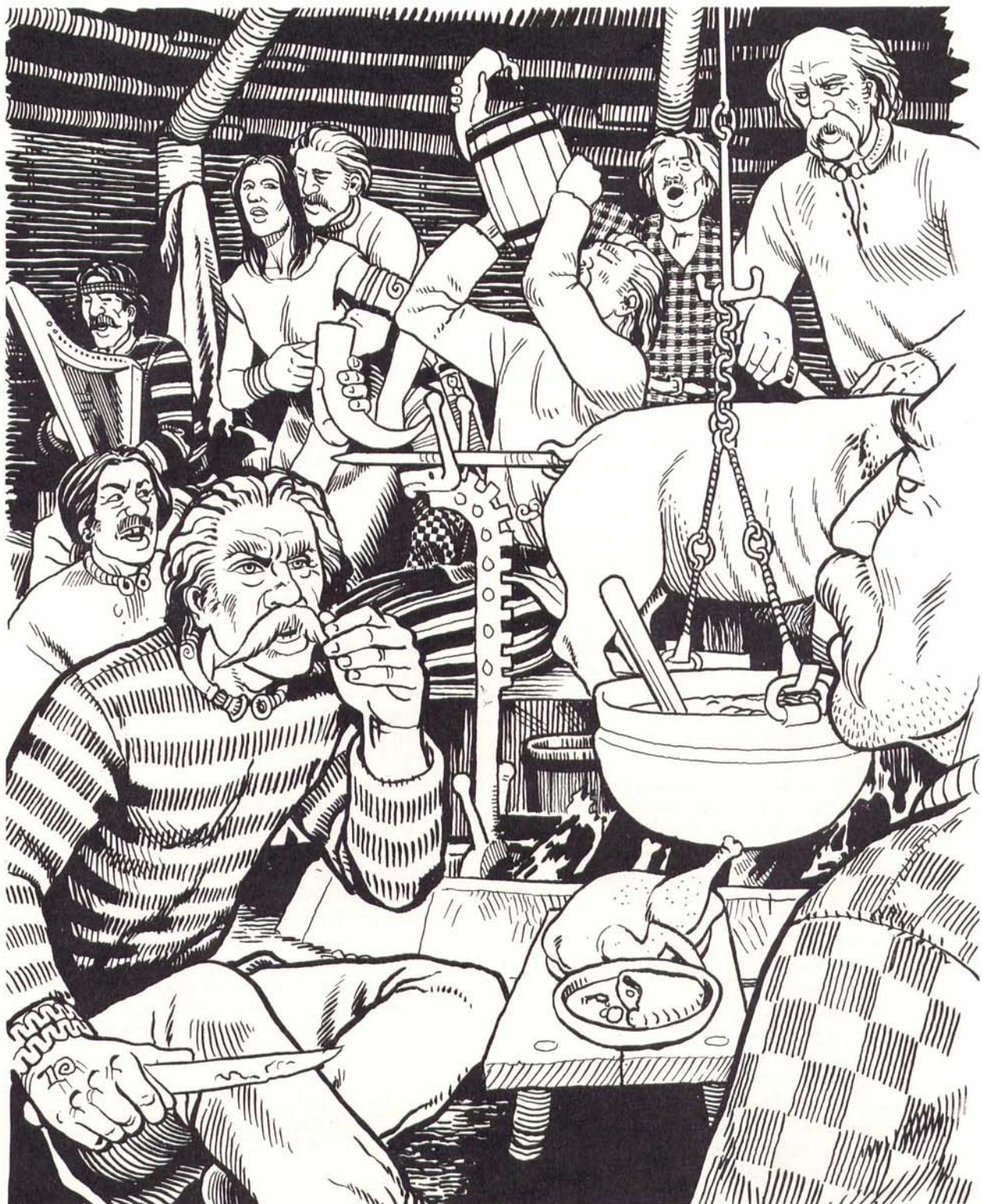
The DM is encouraged to use imagination in creating a treasure-hoard. For example, the player characters might discover a giant's hoard (worth 1,000 gp in standard AD&D® game terms) that contains the following when converted to terms suitable for a Celtic campaign:

Gold torc (250 gp)  
Decorated helmet with a silver boar crest (150 gp)  
Silver-inlaid spear (50 gp)  
Sword-belt with gold fittings (25 gp)  
Sword with silver inlay (50 gp)  
Ornate bronze-faced shield (150 gp)  
Fine cloak embroidered with gold thread (100 gp)  
Gilt-bronze cloak-pin (25 gp)  
Two gold finger-rings (25 and 75 gp)  
Gilt-bronze arm-ring (50 gp)  
Silver drinking cup (50 gp)

All these treasures might have come from a single victory, and a warrior who possessed such a fortune in jewelry and war-gear would surely have had a reputation. As well as creating a more colorful treasure hoard, the DM has started to sketch out some background for the encounter.

### Items of Treasure

Amphora of imported wine  
Bronze bridle-bit, decorated  
Bronze chamfron, decorated  
Bronze chariot-fittings, decorated  
Bronze cauldron, decorated  
Bronze drinking-cup, imported from Greece  
Bronze horn, decorated  
Bronze mace, decorated  
Bronze mirror, decorated  
Bronze serving-dish  
Cloak with richly-embroidered border  
Electrum torc (neck-ring)  
Fidchell/Gwyddwyll set  
Fine cloth, imported  
Gilt-bronze arm-ring  
Gilt-bronze bracelet  
Gilt-bronze brooch  
Gilt-bronze chariot-fittings  
Gilt-bronze cloak-pin  
Gilt-bronze head-band  
Gilt-bronze ornamented scabbard  
Gold arm-ring  
Gold finger-ring  
Gold head-band  
Gold torc (neck-ring)  
Harp, fine quality, decorated with silver and gold inlay  
Helmet with ornamented bronze facing  
Iron cauldron-chains  
Shield with decorated bronze facing  
Silver drinking-cup  
Silvered bronze belt-clasp  
Spear with silver inlay on blade  
Sword with silver inlay on blade  
Sword belt with gilt-bronze fittings



## The Celtic Culture

The Celts are often seen as barbarians—the Greeks and Romans used the word *barbari* to describe Celts more than any other race—but they were not the wild savages that Roman authors would have us believe. The dynamics and values of their society were very different from those of Greece or Rome, and their technology and sciences were more limited in scope, but the Celts had a cultural tradition that was no less strong and ancient.

Today, two thousand years after Rome conquered the majority of the Celtic world, more people claim to be of Celtic descent than Roman. Every land that was once occupied by Celts still bears traces of their culture in its own, and more than one twentieth-century nation looks exclusively to the Celts for its cultural heritage.

While unsophisticated to some eyes and admittedly violent at times, the Celtic culture was not always barbaric. The Celts were self-sufficient farmers, skilled craftsmen, and imaginative and inspiring poets, storytellers, and musicians. The fact that they lacked towns (although not entirely—see p. 75), centers of industrial production, or widespread literacy does not imply backwardness; these were cultural choices, for such things did not fit well with the Celtic lifestyle.

The subjects covered in the previous chapters of this book have focused on fighting, weapons, and monsters because these things are the backbone of a heroic adventure game like the AD&D® game. However, by concentrating on their more violent exploits, it is easy to lose sight of other facets of Celtic culture.

In terms of technological expertise, Celtic and Germanic iron-workers were acknowledged as the best in the ancient world, despite the fact that the Mediterranean peoples had been working iron longer and had the kind of organization and resources which promoted technological advance.

Celtic artists—especially metalworkers—have left a legacy that still strikes a cord deep in the viewer and that is still vibrant and alive in many of the Celtic lands. Celtic poets and storytellers are still heard today, thanks to the work of early medieval monks, and can tell of love, religious devotion, and even social shortcomings as eloquently and inspiringly as they deliver blood-and-thunder epics.

The Celtic priesthood has been so misrepresented by classical historians, 19th-century romantics, and would-be mystics of all ages that it is easy to overlook their importance to the culture and to the development of many traditions and legal ar-

rangements that have survived in many nations to the present day. In their more romanticized form, Celtic druids have had a significant influence on the development of the heroic fantasy genre of which the AD&D game is a part. Scholars have suggested that the Merlin of Arthurian legend was essentially a druid, and there are very few wise wizards in heroic fantasy who do not owe a debt to Merlin.

Details of dress, food, home life, social structure and conventions, and customs and law are described in basic detail here. Unfortunately, this single chapter cannot adequately cover all aspects of Celtic culture. Countless books, for every age and every level of scholarship, have been published describing the Celts and their way of life. A very brief list of suggested reading is given at the end of Chapter 2, and DMs are encouraged to look in a local library or bookstore for additional material.

### Conall's Year

To help illustrate what Celtic life was like, this section follows a year in the life of Conall Mac Eogan. While not everything that happens to Conall would normally happen to one person in the course of a single year, his adventures will serve to illustrate many important points of Celtic life and culture. As Conall's adventures unfold, explanations and game information are given in the screened text.

### Spring

Conall is the eldest son of a warrior named Eogan Mac Dermaid, a follower of Cobhthach Mac Findtan, a minor king in the Irish province of Leinster. Conall has seen his father, uncles, and cousins set off on hunts and raids many times in his fifteen years and always longed to go with them. This year, he has been promised, is the year when he will take up arms. Samhain has come and gone, and with the approaching spring festival of Imbolc, Conall can hardly contain his excitement.

His father has mentioned him to the king, in the hope that the king himself will give Conall his weapons. Conall is a promising youth, and it is possible that the king will favor him in this way, but no decision has been made.

In the meantime, Conall busies himself in preparation for becoming a warrior. He pesters his father, uncles, and brothers to practice with him whenever he can, and he throws himself into games of hurley with the other boys.



One of the boys is Fergus, the son of a neighboring king who is fostered with Cobhthach. Fergus is very much aware of his position, and more than once he has used his foster father's protection to settle scores and work out grudges. He and Conall have never been friends, but, having overheard Eogan talking to the king about his son, Fergus now looks on Conall as a rival. As the king's foster son, Fergus is determined that he—and only he—will receive his arms from the king this year.

Everyone expects hurley to be a rough game, and an occasional injury raises no eyebrows. Brawls sometimes break out but are quickly brought under control. During one game, Fergus spots an opportunity and cracks Conall's head open with his hurley-stick. Conall falls, and Fergus, thinking that no one has seen what he is doing in the confusion of the game, raises his stick for a second blow, planning to break Conall's leg.

He never lands the foul blow, however. Bron, one of Conall's younger brothers, grabs the raised stick and wrestles Fergus to the ground. The other players gather round to pry the two apart and find out what happened. The commotion on the field brings Cobhthach himself to investigate, as by chance he had been walking nearby.

Despite Fergus's protestations, it is clear that he is guilty. Conall's wound is on the back of his head, making it obvious that he was struck down from behind, and more than one of the boys saw him raise his stick for a second blow. Conall is a little dizzy, but the flow of blood from his wound is staunched, and Cobhthach orders his druid Adarc to take personal charge of looking after the wounded youth.

Fergus's plan has backfired badly. Instead of putting his rival out of the way, he has disgraced himself three times—once by striking a foul blow, once by being overpowered by a younger boy, and once by being caught in a lie—and handed Conall the goodwill of the king on a silver platter. Fergus keeps himself apart for the next few days, cursing his luck and plotting to regain his lost position.

Conall recovers in a few days, thanks in part to the ministrations of the druid Adarc. His father warns him not to look for revenge against Fergus, but to leave it to the king to make compensation.

Samhain was the start of winter, and the start of the Celtic year. Taking place about November 1st, it was a time when the natural and supernatural worlds were closer together than usual. When Christianity

forced out the old pagan beliefs, many of the Celtic superstitions survived, and Samhain is now celebrated as All Hallows Eve, or Hallowe'en. Imbolc, celebrated about February 1st, marked the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

With winter over, Celts began to think about the coming year. The boys of the warrior class were always competing to prove themselves ready to take up arms.

Taking up arms was a very important event—in many ways, it was the time when a boy became a man. There was no fixed age for this; it happened when the boy's family and leaders thought he was ready. The legendary hero Cu Chulainn is said to have taken up arms at the age of seven, but this is almost certainly an exaggeration. Most boys took up arms between the ages of fourteen and eighteen.

Just as the time of taking up arms was important, so was the person from whom a young man received his weapons. The gift of weapons created a bond between the donor and recipient, and to receive weapons from the king was a great honor.

The practice of fostering the sons of the nobility was widespread in Ireland, and seems to have been practiced among tribal leaders in Britain and Gaul as well. This social custom had two main purposes. It promoted peace between allied tribes, since no chieftain would attack a neighbor who had the keeping of his own son. Second, it forged and maintained links between the tribes. A chieftain was honorbound to an ally who had raised his son, and the son, when he returned to his people and eventually became chief, would have many friends and allies among the fostering tribe.

Part hostage and part honored guest, fosterlings had an ambiguous position in Celtic society. They were outsiders, and sometimes found it difficult to adjust to their new homes; they might suffer if there was any falling-out between their true father and their foster father. On the other hand, they were under the protection of their foster father, who was normally the chieftain or king, and could sometimes get away with things that other boys could not, using the protection of their foster father and the threat of their true father's displeasure.

Hurley is still played in Ireland today. The ancient game is related to field hockey in much the same way as the original Native American game of lacrosse is related to the modern sport of the same name. It was seen as a good way for a boy to build up his strength, speed, toughness, and reflexes in preparation for becoming a warrior. The technique



of setting limbs was not discovered at this time, so a broken leg would have crippled Conall for life, ending any hopes he had of becoming a warrior.

Since Fergus is his foster son, the king is ultimately responsible for compensation to Conall and his family; in terms of honor, the king now owes Conall a favor to make up for Fergus's behavior. Having Conall tended by his own druid is an acknowledgement of this.

## Summer

Conall becomes a warrior in time to help drive the cattle through the Beltaine fires. Now fully recovered from his injury, Conall receives his weapons from the king himself: a fine helmet, three javelins, a spear, and a shield. Secretly, he had been hoping for a sword, but he is not disappointed. The spear belonged to his grandfather Dermaid. In his time, Dermaid was a noted warrior and the king's cousin, and Conall promises himself that he will never dishonor this weapon in particular.

Adarc the druid reads the omens for Conall as he takes up his weapons and finds that they are good. Privately, Adare advises the young man that he must never harm any water-bird or eat its flesh, for great misfortune will come to him if he does. A simple enough geas, thinks Conall, but he makes a careful note of it, nonetheless.

Conall is very proud of himself now that he is a warrior and finds that everyone treats him differently. The men now call him by his name instead of just "boy"; the girls look at him a little differently and some giggle as he goes by. He soon discovers, though, that there is another side to a warrior's life.

Eating in the king's hall for the first time, Conall cuts himself a piece of meat from the haunch of a deer killed that day. As he begins to eat, a heavy hand descends upon his forearm. He turns to find himself facing Find Mac Airt, the king's nephew and one of the deadliest fighters in the hall.

"Well, now," bellows Find, "I've caught a mouse eating the hero's portion. What do you think I should do with him?"

The other warriors laugh at Find's joke, but Conall can see something in his eyes that has very little humor. Wriggling out of Find's grasp, Conall draws his knife.

"This mouse has a sharp tooth!" Conall retorts. A few of the warriors laugh at the youth's audacity, but the king acts quickly to calm the situation. He calls for Conall to surrender the hero's portion

to Find, unless any warrior in the hall will lay claim to it, which no one does. Then he advises Conall not to claim the hero's portion again until he can back his claim with deeds. Conall takes the meat across the hall and hands it to Find.

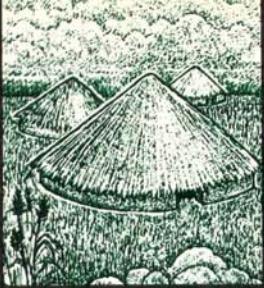
"Find Mac Airt," he says, looking straight into the other warrior's eyes, "I freely give you the hero's portion, which I took in ignorance and not in insult. It is justly yours, and I make no claim to it this night. I swear by the oath of our people, though, that a day will dawn when my deeds shall outnumber yours, and you shall surrender the hero's portion to me!"

Find stares hard into Conall's eyes for a moment, then laughs heartily and claps Conall on the shoulder so hard he nearly falls. Uproar breaks out in the hall at the young warrior's defiant speech. Some laugh at his presumption and some at his spirit, but one thing is for certain: everyone now knows the name of Conall Mac Eogan. As Conall returns to his place, he catches his father's eye. Eogan nods in approval—Conall has dealt with his mistake well.

Conall realized his ambition to receive weapons from the king himself. There were a number of factors behind this: his father Eogan's record of service and influence with the king, Conall's own prowess, and the honor debt the king owed him for the foul blow dealt by Fergus in the hurley game. Conall will be particularly proud of the spear which belonged to his illustrious grandfather.

Beltaine was the Celtic festival marking the beginning of summer, and was celebrated about May 1st. The celebrations involved driving the livestock between two fires (the Celtic name Beltaine means "the fires of Bel"—Bel was an important deity) to ensure their health and strength for the rest of the year. Many of the May Day celebrations which still take place in Europe are linked to this ancient festival.

Conall did not receive a sword at his first arming, for a number of reasons. Mainly, it was a question of balance; the king evened the score with Conall and his family by giving him arms, but to give him a sword as well would have shown a degree of favor which Conall had not yet earned and which might have made some of his other warriors jealous and resentful. However, Dermaid's spear made up for any disappointment, and honor was satisfied on all sides. Conall may still hope to receive a sword from the king, but he will have to



earn it with his deeds.

Adarc's divination for Conall upon his entering manhood was generally favorable, containing nothing outstandingly good and nothing outstandingly bad. Adarc would also have been consulted to decide the most favorable day for Conall to take up arms. He has discovered that Conall bears a geas, which will bring him bad luck if he ever harms or eats the meat of any water-bird; this is a serious matter, and only Adarc and Conall will ever know of it. It is a terrible thing for an enemy to find out one's geas.

Conall's mind must have been wandering when he cut himself meat from the haunch of the deer. This cut of meat—called the hero's portion—was reckoned to be the sweetest, and the custom was that the best warrior in the hall had the first claim to it. Men died contesting the right to the hero's portion, and Conall was lucky that Find did not take his action as a deliberate insult and challenge him to a fight. Instead, he merely set out to box the ears of this presumptuous youth.

Conall was determined not to lose face in this situation. He had embarrassed himself enough by mistakenly taking the hero's portion, and he had no intention of allowing himself to be beaten like a naughty child. As a warrior, he had to stand up for himself. He knew that standing up to Find could mean his death, but such was the warrior's way. Conall proved his courage, and the king probably saved his life by intervening.

The good grace with which he acknowledged his mistake counted in Conall's favor, but he was careful not to climb down too far. Faced with a situation which could have made him the laughing-stock of the warriors and set his whole career off on the wrong foot, Conall handled things very well. His oath, "I swear by the oath of our people," was a powerful one, invoking the spirits of the tribe and all that it stood for—things too powerful to be named. Everyone would take such an oath seriously. As the tale continues, Conall will have to work hard to live up to his word, but he has salvaged what he can from the situation and made a chance to redeem himself.

Soon after his confrontation with Find, Conall finds that he has acquired a nickname. The other warriors call him Conall Luch—Conall the Mouse—after Find's taunting. He is not too pleased with this but accepts it with the best grace he can, resolving to do deeds which will earn him a

better nickname. Meanwhile, he continues to practice with the other warriors, striving to give a good account of himself and being very careful to avoid giving offense again.

Fergus sends Conall a gold arm-ring as a gift and asks the young warrior to spar with him, so that he may hope to take up arms the following year. Conall decides to forgive the fosterling, thinking that his friendship might be useful in the future when they are both influential in their own tribes—but he jokingly wears his helmet throughout the sparing-session, to remind Fergus that what is forgotten may not be forgotten!

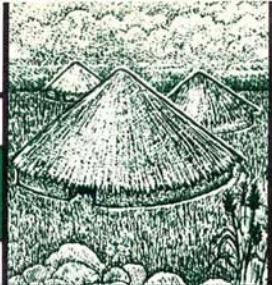
While the two are practicing, Fergus stumbles and falls, cutting his face on a sharp stone. It is a deep gash, sure to leave a scar, spoiling the boy's looks for life. Conall tries to help Fergus to his feet, but Fergus pushes him away and runs off. The next day, he has disappeared. The king is very worried and questions Conall closely about what happened.

Three days later, a group of warriors sent by Fergus's true father arrive. They go to Cobhthach and tell him that Fergus arrived home telling stories of how he had been mistreated by every one of Cobhthach's followers, especially a young warrior named Conall who struck him down, scarred him for life and stole his gold arm-ring. Cobhthach sends for Conall, and the visitors hear his side of the story but remain unmoved. They tell Cobhthach that Fergus's father demands fourteen cows in compensation for his son's maiming. Cobhthach refuses this demand and sends them away.

Fearing a cattle-raid in response to his refusal, Cobhthach orders the warriors to take turns watching the cattle. A few days later, the peace of afternoon is shattered by the sound of a horn and soon after the noises of battle from over the hill where the cattle are grazing. Seizing his weapons, Conall runs toward the pastures. Cobhthach overtakes him in his chariot, with Find's chariot driving behind him.

Conall arrives on the scene to find a dozen or so warriors from Fergus's tribe trying to steal the cattle. Three or four young warriors have already been killed, and others are wounded. The raiders are outnumbered as Conall and the others arrive on foot and try to break away and drive a few of the cattle off with them. Conall throws his javelins as he charges in pursuit, wounding one of the raiders. They are driven off and no cattle are lost, although one cow has been killed in the fray.

The following day, Cobhthach authorizes a cat-



tle-raid in retribution. Conall is among the warriors chosen; his father was wounded in the previous day's skirmish, and Fergus slandered him with his accusation, so Cobhthach decides that Conall has a right to go. The raid is led by Find, and sets out at first light. As expected, the cattle are guarded, but the guards are not expecting such a large force and are quickly turned to flight. Conall kills one defender and wounds another.

"See this arm-ring?" he says to the wounded man. "Tell him who freely gave it to me that he lies when he says Conall Mac Eogan stole it. Tell him the next time we spar together he'd best not fall over his own feet, and he'd best bring weapons of metal instead of wood." With that, Conall lets the man go and watches him limp away. Then he rejoins the other warriors as they drive the cattle away.

Response to the raid is swift, and the raiders soon see a large force of warriors catching up with them. They ford the river which marks the boundary of their own territory, and Find turns his chariot around.

"We'll hold them here," he says. "Let the three youngest drive the cattle home and bring Cobhthach here with the rest of the warriors."

"Not I," answers Conall. "None of this would have happened without the quarrel between Fergus and me, and I'll stay here to meet him." Find grins.

"Well said, little mouse. Let the three youngest except Conall Mac Eogan take the cattle home. Quickly now!"

The cattle are driven on, and the remaining warriors stand on their bank of the ford. Find drives his chariot into the ford, and draws it up with the far bank on his left. They wait and watch as the enemy force arrives.

"Who brings weapons to the land of Cobhthach Mac Findtan?" bellows Find. "He who would cross this ford by force must be a better man than Find Mac Airt!" A chariot drives forward on the opposite bank, and stops with its left side to Find.

"We come from Bron Mac Froech to bring back his stolen cattle," shouts the warrior in the chariot, "and to bring back the head of the whelp who dishonored his son and broke the hospitality of the foster home!" He points at Conall with his sword, having recognized Fergus's arm-ring. "He who would stop us must be a better man than Loeg Mac Mane!"

Conall recognizes the name—Loeg Mac Mane is a renowned warrior in these parts. Conall steps

forward.

"I am Conall Mac Eogan Mac Dermaid!" he shouts. "I am guilty of no more than giving the truth and receiving lies in return! The boy Fergus dishonors himself and his people with his stories! If Loeg Mac Mane wants my head, let him try to take it!" By the time he has stopped speaking, Conall is level with Find's chariot. Find looks down at him in surprise, but Conall nods. Find turns back to Loeg Mac Mane.

"Conall Mac Eogan has spoken!" he shouts. "Who will you fight, Loeg Mac Mane?" Loeg looks uncertain for an instant; his warriors are looking at each other and at their opponents.

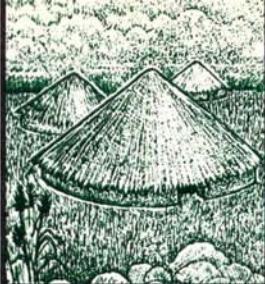
"Find Mac Airt I know," shouts Loeg, "Dermaid I knew, Eogan Mac Dermaid I know, but Conall Mac Dermaid I know not! I will fight the stronger man or whichever one will face me!" He dismounts from his chariot, and his charioteer drives it out of the ford.

"Out of the ford, little mouse," murmurs Find. "This time the hero's part is mine." He dismounts from his chariot, and Conall walks alongside it out of the ford. The two heroes advance into the calf-deep water, weapons drawn.

Cattle were the main form of wealth in the Celtic world, and were often used to pay large sums between leaders. The compensation demanded by Fergus's father was two cumals—a high price considering the circumstances. Cattle-raiding was an important activity in Celtic society; apart from the intrinsic value of the cattle, the raids were seen as a good way of keeping warriors ready for battle and testing one's neighbors' strength.

Conall's action in letting the wounded man go was a common way of spreading a warrior's reputation. True heroes would take an opponent's head and send his charioteer back with the body and the story of the battle, but at this point in the story, Conall was not quite in that league. However, he gave Fergus's people his name and his side of the story, along with the news of his deeds, by sending the man back. By referring to Fergus as a boy, and by not giving him his formal name, Conall expressed his contempt of his accuser.

Pulling up one's chariot with the left (shield) side facing someone was a sign of distrust or hostility. Find put his left side to the far bank of the ford as a challenge to the pursuers, and Loeg Mac Mane pulled his chariot up with the left side facing Find in response.



At the ford, Conall stood up for his rights as a warrior once more and gave Find good reasons why he should not be sent back with the cattle. In his response to Loeg Mac Mane, he used his grandfather's name as well as his father's, to impress his foe with his distinguished lineage.

In challenging Loeg directly, Conall put Find in a tricky position, since as the leader of the raid and the leading warrior present it was Find's right and duty to engage the enemy champion in single combat. Find had the choice of dishonoring Conall by sending him back to the ranks in front of the enemy or letting him have the challenge and being seen to stand down to a younger and less experienced warrior. Find solved the problem by letting Loeg choose; he knew that the enemy champion would lose face by choosing a weaker opponent over a stronger one. Find's mention of the hero's past reminded Conall of the incident of the meat and warned him that he should not try to take Find's place again.

Although the heroes in the tale were said to drive their own chariots, in fact they rode while their charioteers drove. This is a convention from Celtic literature, where the heroes are the focus of the story rather than the charioteers.

The two heroes are still fighting in the ford when Cobhthach arrives with reinforcements. Both are wounded, but neither one seriously. It is near dusk, and Cobhthach orders the fighting to stop. He sends Loeg and his men back with a message that Bron Mac Froech, Fergus's father, should meet him at the ford on the following day with his son, his druids, and as many warriors as he feels appropriate. Conall and a few of the younger warriors are left to guard the ford overnight, in case of a sneak attack.

The following morning, Conall and his companions see a large group approaching the ford. One of the young warriors runs to tell Cobhthach, who arrives at the ford with Adarc, his bard Niall, and the rest of the warriors, Conall's father Eogan among them. The two forces stand facing each other as the two kings and their druids meet by the ford. After a while, Conall is sent for, and gives his account of events in front of Bron Mac Froech, his druid, and a bandaged Fergus, who cannot quite look him in the eye.

By midafternoon, terms for peace have been concluded; Cobhthach agrees to return half the cattle taken in the raid, keeping the rest to replace the cow killed by Bron's raiders and in compensation for the men killed and wounded in both raids

and the slanders of young Fergus. In return, Bron swears to abide by this peace and not to seek further compensation or revenge or allow any of his followers to do so. It is agreed that Conall may keep the arm-ring, which was freely given, and that Fergus is due no compensation for his scar, which he caused himself.

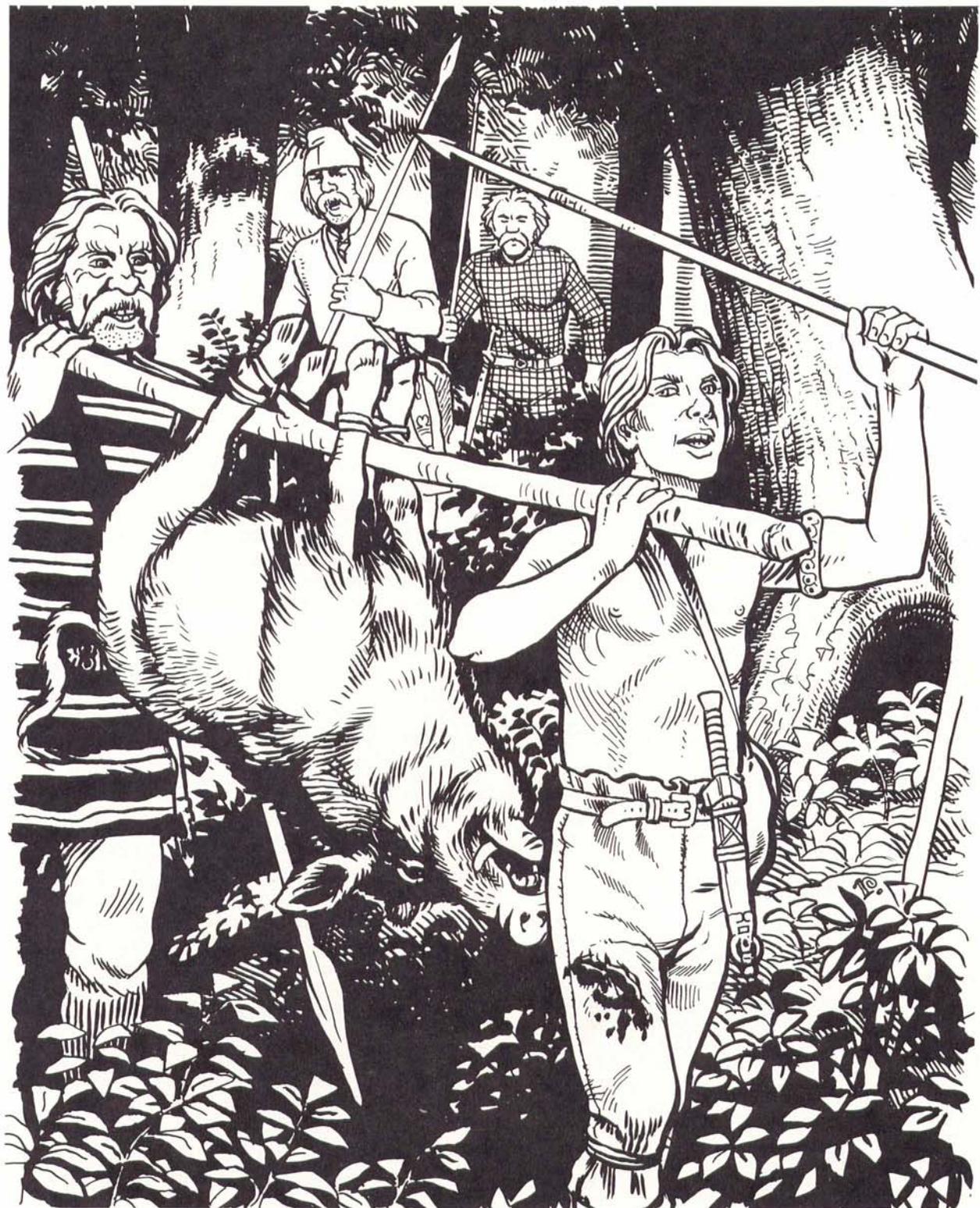
Injuries and fatalities were probably rarer in cattle-raids than Celtic literature would suggest; some African cultures practiced cattle-raiding into the 20th century, and injuries were seldom serious. In this case, however, two heroes engaged in a single combat, from which neither one could break off without losing face. Cobhthach's arrival—and his orders to Find to stop fighting—saved the fight from lasting to the death and prevented any honor being lost on either side. His invitation to Brond to meet and talk was reinforced by the fact that he had all of Brond's cattle.

Druids were present at negotiations of all kinds. As well as being trusted advisors and legal authorities, the sanctity of their persons would prevent fighting from breaking out. Cobhthach's settlement was generous and a sure sign that he wanted no more trouble; he was within his rights to keep all the cattle, but this would have invited war. All Cobhthach wanted was for Brond to accept that Fergus had been lying and just compensation for the trouble that had ensued. Note Brond's oath to seal the peace and end the matter—such oaths had to be very carefully worded to make a peace hold, for any loophole could legitimately be exploited.

## Fall

Lugnasadh marks the end of summer, and people's thoughts turn to the coming winter. Grain is harvested, and a little later the first nuts and berries begin to appear. For the king and his warriors, it is a time for feasting and hunting.

Conall sets out on his first boar hunt with the king and the other warriors. He is excited but nervous—he has seen warriors come back from the hunt wounded and even killed by the boars. The hunt is successful, but Conall finds himself facing a cornered boar. Cobhthach had brought the boar to bay, but a sudden charge and treacherous ground knocked the king down and left him vulnerable. The boar turns on the king, and Conall, who happens to be nearest, jumps in the way. The boar charges, and Conall stands his ground and runs it





through with his grandfather's spear. Although mortally wounded, the frenzied boar keeps coming, determined to take the young hunter with it. Conall manages to dispatch the beast and suffers nothing more than a small gash in his leg.

The other warriors are impressed by young Conall's courage in facing the boar and by the strength and skill he showed. Find claps him on the shoulder.

"Well done, Conall Mac Eogan," he grins. "That was more than a mouse's job!" Conall swells with pride—it is the first time that Find has called him by his full name. At the feast which follows the hunt, Cobhthach rewards Conall with the fine gold torc from around his own neck, and the bard Muredach spins a verse about his showdown with the boar which has the warriors roaring in approval. Conall also finds that he has a new nickname. Conall Luch, the Mouse, is no more—now the warriors call him Conall Cullach: Conall the Boar.

Lugnasadh was the Celtic festival marking the end of summer and the beginning of fall, and was celebrated about August 1st. As well as the grain and cattle they raised, most Celtic communities relied on fruit and nuts from the forest and on hunting game. Wild boars were particularly respected for their strength and courage and were considered a worthy opponent for a warrior. Boar designs are often found on Celtic helmets and other weapons, and boar hunts had a significance far beyond the simple winning of meat.

Fall was the best time for hunting wild boar for a number of reasons. The boars were well fed after the summer, and starting to lay down winter fat. Not only did this mean that they were in peak condition as an opponent, but it also meant that their meat was at its sweetest. In the spring the boars raised their young, which made them vulnerable but also unpredictable and incredibly dangerous; it was not honorable to hunt them until their young were raised, or at least capable of looking after themselves.

Conall won renown for saving the king from injury or death and for killing his first boar. The fact that the bard made a verse about this is very significant, and this will be reckoned as the first of Conall's deeds as a warrior. His new nickname—indicating that he was the equal of a wild boar in strength, skill, and ferocity—was a great compliment, and the king's gift of his own gold torc was a sign of gratitude and favor. Conall

showed great promise as a warrior, and this was now acknowledged by all.

## Winter

The year ends with Samhain. The crops are all stored and the livestock moved to their winter pastures, closer to the village. The high pastures will stand empty until next winter. As the leaves fall, firewood is brought in, along with the peat that has been drying through the summer.

Winter is a slow time for Conall, as it is for everyone else. There are occasional hunts for deer and wild boar, and on one occasion Conall and some of the younger warriors are sent to hunt down a pack of wolves that has been troubling an outlying farmstead.

Conall spends a lot of time playing fidchell with the other warriors, and by the end of the winter he is winning more games than he loses. He also finds time for a romantic liaison with Eithne, one of Cobhthach's nieces. Some wagging tongues begin to talk of marriage, but the two are in no hurry. Perhaps at Imbolc, or perhaps Beltane, or perhaps they will tire of each other and part. Conall has many years ahead of him, and many deeds before he can make good his boast to Find Mac Airt.

Like most rural cultures, the Celtic world came to a virtual standstill in winter. Thanks to a warm Atlantic current flowing north-east from the Gulf of Mexico, Ireland has a mild climate and winters are hardly ever severe, but the days grow short and rain and sleet make a winter crop impossible. People had to rely on what has been stored and wait for winter to be over.

Game was the only resource which was still available in winter, and hunting was one of the few outdoor activities at this time. Trouble with wolves and foxes was common in winter—most of their natural prey species were hibernating, and they turned increasingly to raiding livestock. In a hard winter, wolves might even have attacked people, although they would go for horses, sheep, or cattle if they could. Foxes were too small to threaten sheep and larger species, but chickens, geese, and such were fair game. Part of the fox's reputation for cunning comes from his ability to get into supposedly impregnable henhouses.

Fidchell was a boardgame which appears to be much like the modern-day game of fox and geese. In Celtic society, it occupied a social niche similar



to the position of chess in the Middle Ages. Playing fidchell was regarded as a social accomplishment, and worthy of a warrior.

Conall's affair with Eithne may have led gossips to talk of marriage, but the Celts were much freer in this regard than many other cultures. Celtic women were in a much better position than their Roman and Greek counterparts, and far better off than the women of medieval Europe. Eithne had just as much right to end the affair—or marriage, if it came to it—as Conall. However, a marriage-alliance with Cobhthach's family through his niece would strengthen Conall's position within the tribe.

## Social Rankings

Like most ancient cultures, Celtic society was arranged into several classes. Not everyone was born equal, but some could hope to rise in rank through their deeds. Celtic society is generally divided into five classes: slaves, commoners, craftsmen, the priesthood, and the warrior nobility. In the Roman and post-Roman periods, royalty began to emerge as a separate class but was never as distinct from the nobility as the royalty of the Middle Ages.

### Slave

The Celts practiced slavery, but not in the commercialized and institutionalized manner of the Mediterranean world. Those tribes which traded with Greece and Rome traded slaves as well as other commodities, but very little is known of the life of slaves within Celtic society. It seems likely that they did most of the menial work, tilling fields and serving meals. Slaves do not seem to have been a large component of Celtic society.

### Commoner

The bulk of Celtic society was made up of free farmers and herders, and their life was little different than the lives of farmers and herders elsewhere. Their prestige was less than members of the nobility—a farmer's oath was worth about one-tenth of the oath of a minor king, for instance—but they were respected and valued members of society, with guaranteed rights in law. Commoners were subject to the nobility, but not enslaved to them like the peasant farmers of medieval Europe.

### Craftsman

The skilled craftsmen, along with the priesthood (see below), formed the middle class of Celtic society. A craftsman normally lived in a noble's stronghold, enjoying patronage rather than living by trade as Roman and medieval craftsmen did. Many of the most renowned craftsmen traveled widely, staying with one chieftain for a while and then moving on. Kings and chiefs would compete to attract a master craftsman, and these individuals were often treated as being of equal status to the warrior nobility.

### Priesthood

In addition to the druids, the priestly class of Celtic society included bards, manteis and—according to some sources—specialist scholars in law, history, mythology, and nature lore. Other sources believe that these specialist scholars were no more than one particular group of druids and bards who formed the living data bank which held the Celtic tradition and culture.

The priesthood was highly respected and held certain privileges. Druids were sacrosanct and no-one could do them violence. Classical authors write with awe of druids running between two armies that were closing for battle and preventing bloodshed by their divine authority.

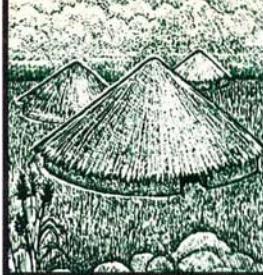
Druids do not have this elevated position in surviving Irish and Welsh literature, but it must be remembered that this literature was first written down two or three centuries after the coming of Christianity to these areas; one might expect the position and power of the old pagan priesthood to be downplayed somewhat.

### Nobility

The warrior nobility was the highest class of Celtic society, and it is from this class that kings are drawn. Hereditary succession to kingship was common but not mandatory; in most Celtic lands, kings were chosen by election from a group of noble families.

In Ireland, anyone who was descended from a past king—to a maximum separation of four generations—could lay claim to the rulership of the tribe. This meant that not only the sons of a king had a claim, but also the grandsons, great-grandsons and great-great-grandsons.

The Celtic kings were not absolute rulers, and



although they do not seem to have been overthrown often, it was certainly possible. Jealous and disappointed brothers would often flee to neighboring tribes and stir up trouble—when Julius Caesar began his conquest of Gaul, he was helped enormously by disappointed claimants to the thrones of various tribes.

It also seems that there was a physical qualification to kingship. The health of the tribe and its lands was mystically linked to the health of the king himself, and a king who was sickly or maimed had to stand down. In Irish legend, the great hero Nuadh was disqualified from kingship of the Tuatha De Danann because he lost an arm, and even though the healer-wizard Diancecht made him a silver arm which worked just as well, it was clear that Nuadh could never be king.

The lowest level of kingship was the king of a tuath or pagus—such kings were essentially clan chiefs, although nearly all leaders adopted the title of king. These sub-kings were subordinate to the king of the tribe. Tribes came together in temporary alliances which were often short-lived and always fraught with jealousy and intrigue. Occasionally, a strong leader might bind all the tribes in an area together under his rule, and adopt the title of “high king,” but the Celtic world was not inclined toward nationhood, and the domains of a high king invariably fell apart after his death, if not before.

## Player Characters

Player characters can begin the game as members of any class except slave. Most are assumed to be commoners—the sons and daughters of free farmers—but those born with the appropriate birth-gift (see Chapter 3) are members of the nobility. Any freeborn character can enter any adventuring character class—there were very few class restrictions in Celtic society, and for game purposes it is preferable to overlook them entirely than to try to quantify them with rules.

Player characters born into the nobility have a chance of being eligible for the kingship of their clan or tribe. In order to be eligible, a character must have the birth-gift of status (p. 15) and choose to be born into the nobility. Next, the player must roll 1d20. On a result of 1-4, the character is descended from a past king, and the number rolled on the die indicates the closeness of the tie. A 1 represents one generation (i.e., the character is

the son of a king), a 2 represents two generations (grandson), etc. Note that simply being eligible does not automatically secure the succession for a character—there will be many rivals, and a great deal of intrigue and politicking surrounding the election of a new king.

## Clans and Tribes

The main unit of Celtic society was the tribe—*tuath* in Irish, *ethne* in Greek, and *civitas* in Latin. The extent of a tribe’s lands varied with geography, population, and the power of the tribe itself, but most Celtic tribes occupied an area of roughly the same size as a modern English county. In fact, some English counties take their names from the Celtic tribes who once occupied them: Kent is named after the Cantii, for instance, and Dorset after the Durotriges.

Within the tribe, there were smaller social units which might be called clans; the Romans called them *pagi*. In the early Christian period the rural Celts, who still lived in clans and worshipped the old gods, were called *pagani*—“clansmen”—to distinguish them from the Romanized and Christianized Celts of the towns; hence the modern word *pagan*.

## Social Values

The values on which Celtic society was based are common to nearly every society on earth which has been given the name “barbarian,” and to so-called “lawless” societies from the Stone Age to the Wild West and beyond. Loyalty was the key, and loyalty operated at various levels. A Celt was expected to be loyal to himself, to his kindred, and to his tribe.

## Personal Virtues

Loyalty to oneself demanded that a character should be strong, brave, skilled in combat, and true to his word. Someone who failed in any of these basic virtues was seen as betraying his own honor.

## Kindred Ties

Kin were a vital protection in Celtic society. They would stand with you against your enemies, avenge your murder, stand surety for you in law, and back you up whenever you needed it. This du-



ty was two-way, of course, and a character owed the same to each and every one of his kin.

In Irish literature, a kinless man is called *díenn*—"headless"—because a character who is alone in the world might be as good as dead. A man of exceptional strength and skill might be able to survive without kin, but he had better get used to sleeping with both eyes open. Someone who could survive without kin was regarded with the same mixture of awe, fear, and distrust as an Old West gunfighter or a modern outlaw biker.

### The Tribe

The tribe was the highest focus of loyalty in Celtic society. There was no real idea of Celts uniting against non-Celts, and when the Romans began to attack the Celtic world this lack of unity and inability to lay old feuds aside was the single most important factor influencing Roman victory.

The tribe gave each member a set of traditional friends and enemies, and a social structure within which the character's own position and social progress could be measured. Loyalty to the tribe was the most important requirement of Celtic society, and those who betrayed the tribe to its enemies were regarded with hatred and contempt.

### Warrior Societies

Warrior societies were not common in Celtic society, and may never have existed outside Celtic literature. Three famous societies were the fiana who followed Fionn Mac Cumhail, the boy troop of Ulster which is mentioned in the *Tain*, and the followers of King Arthur in the *Mabinogion*, who would become the Knights of the Round Table in later stories.

In the stories where they appear, the warrior societies seem to replace a member's kindred, but loyalty to the tribe is supreme and nearly all members of a society come from a single tribe or an alliance of tribes. The members of the society treat each other as family, standing together, avenging each other, and so on, but kindred ties still bind, and from time to time a member might take a leave of absence from the society (or sometimes leave altogether) to fulfill some family obligation.

Conditions for membership varied from society to society. The followers of Fionn and Arthur were united simply by virtue of following the same leader and by the common experience of fighting together. The boy troop of Ulster was a group of young warriors in

training and was bound together by being fostered at the court of King Conchobar.

Although they probably never existed outside of heroic tales, warrior societies are useful for a fantasy campaign. Player characters might form the nucleus of a society, which gradually expands as they grow in fame and attract henchmen and followers. Perhaps, in time, they might rival the glory of the fiana, and have their deeds sung down through the centuries, wherever warriors gather.

### Celtic Women

The Celtic world was male-dominated, like the rest of the ancient world. However, women had a respected place in Celtic society, and enjoyed a great deal more freedom than their "civilized" Greek and Roman counterparts. It may have been the existence of Celtic warrior-queens like Boudicca that inspired the Roman fascination with female barbarian warriors that survives to this day in many fantasy novels and movies.

History as well as legend record the appearance of women—especially queens—on the battlefield, and Celtic female burials have been excavated with lavish grave-goods indicating considerable personal wealth and power. Little is known about the lot in life of women outside the nobility.

### Female Adventurers

To the Celtic mind, fighting and adventuring were men's work while a woman's place was to mind the hearth and raise the children. However, a woman who was strong-willed and capable could break this pattern, and there are many powerful female characters in Celtic literature.

Irish literature sees the great hero Cu Chulainn being trained by the female warrior Scathach, who seems to have run a school for warriors. In the *Mabinogion*, Peredur was trained by the nine witches of Gloucester—perhaps a garbled memory of a similar institution. Queen Medb of Connaught takes the battlefield in the *Tain Bo Cuailnge*, just as Boudicca does in accounts of the Iceni rising.

Celtic sorceresses wielded immense power; Morgan la Fay from Arthurian myth may be a Christianized form of the Celtic war-goddess the Morrigan, and Welsh literature in particular is thickly populated with magic-using women, both good and evil. The three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* belong to the same tradition.

Some Greek and Roman sources mention druid-



esses, but the details are uncertain; in a fantasy campaign, female druids, bards, and manteis are perfectly acceptable.

Like warrior societies, female adventurers probably existed in stories far more than in fact, but there is no reason to exclude them from a campaign. Playing a female character can present a number of unique challenges.

Female warriors will encounter various reactions in male NPCs, ranging from scorn to superstitious awe. These females are bucking the social conventions which keep a woman at home looking after the children; but memories of female warriors in story and superstition will cause a certain amount of awe in some male NPCs. Provided a female warrior can prove her abilities (which she is likely to be called upon to do often), awe will have the upper hand, but psychology is as important as force of arms in dealing with male NPCs.

Druidesses, female bards, and manteis will be regarded little differently from male characters in the same class, although from time to time a second opinion might be sought from a male character if a judgment or prediction is not to a chieftain's liking. Women are thought to have a weaker grasp of law and politics than men, but to be in closer touch with the mystical; this will affect how female

characters in these classes are perceived.

Female spellcasters will normally be treated with awe and a little distrust. Almost all the powerful sorceresses of Celtic literature are evil, or at least so capricious and unfathomable in their motives that they cannot be treated as good, and the Morrigan, who is the ultimate model for such characters, was a bloodthirsty goddess who represented the unreasoning ferocity and slaughter of war. This is not to say that female spellcasters will be burnt as witches on sight; there will be immense respect for their abilities, but trust will be very hard-won.

## Fostering

It was a common practice in the Celtic world for the sons of high-ranking nobles to be raised by foster parents in another settlement, clan, or tribe. Roman authors interpret these foster sons as hostages, and this may have been partially true. However, fostering had a number of other important functions within Celtic society.

First, it fostered links between communities, clans, and tribes. The foster family of a ruler's son would remain as friends and allies when the son became king in his turn, and in the absence of formal or long-lasting intertribal alliances, this prac-



tice ensured a measure of stability.

Second, the foster son grew up within the society of an important neighbor, and would have an intimate knowledge of who was important and influential, coupled with an understanding of their personalities and foibles which could be immensely useful in future negotiations or strategic planning.

Finally, fostering could be used in a similar way to gift-giving (see p. 55), to emphasize one chieftain's authority over another. The gift in this case was trust, and to betray or attack someone who had entrusted you with the well-being of his own son was one of the lowest acts imaginable. At the same time, this gift of trust was so great that it could never be repaid except by service, and until the boy was raised to manhood, the foster father was effectively in the true father's debt.

A great deal depended on the personalities involved—especially the personality and behavior of the foster son—and, as in the case of Fergus earlier in this chapter, such arrangements could be canceled if either side felt it had a good enough reason. This usually signaled a serious deterioration in relations between the two sides.

## Fortresses and Farms

The basis of Celtic life was farming. There were no real towns in the Celtic world until Greek and Roman influence came into play, and the bulk of the population lived on small farmsteads consisting of a number of circular huts surrounded by a ditch and palisaded rampart. The fields nearest the farm buildings were normally used for grain and vegetables, with the livestock grazing farther away.

Celtic fortresses in Gaul and Britain were earth-ramparted hilltop forts which could reach considerable sizes. They do not seem to have been continually occupied; instead, they were a place of refuge for the local population and their livestock in times of trouble. As contact with Rome progressed, the population became settled in larger enclosed settlements which archaeologists call *oppida*, from the Latin name for "town." The site of an *oppidum* was generally chosen for communications rather than defense, and trade seems to have been an important activity, as well as metal-working and pottery.

Ireland has a unique type of Celtic fort called the *rath*, or ring-fort. This is a circular fortification built

of unmortared stone, normally with a single gateway between 130 and 160 feet in diameter. Raths were single-story affairs, and their walls were sheer and 20 to 30 feet high. Many raths have associated field-boundaries, and many were fortified farmsteads rather than forts in any military sense. Some 40,000 raths are said to exist in Ireland.

The Scottish *broch* was similar but usually taller than the rath. Brochs often have extremely thick walls with rooms set into them.

## Food and Drink

Since the Celts were primarily farmers and hunters, they were self-sufficient in food. Wine was imported from the Mediterranean lands, and some gourmet foods may have been imported by communities in close contact with the Greek and Roman worlds. The Celtic diet consisted mainly of meat, fish, grain, vegetables, and dairy products.

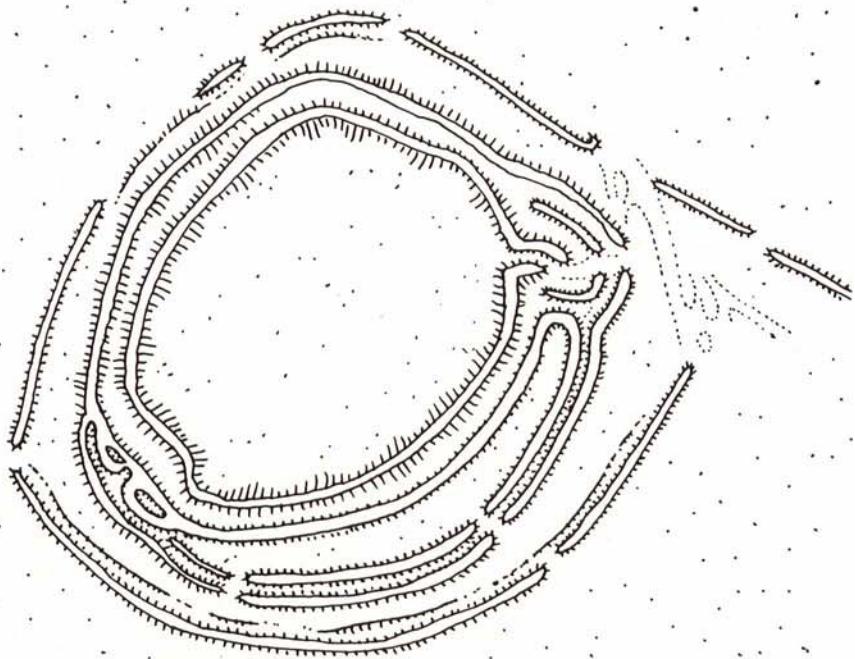
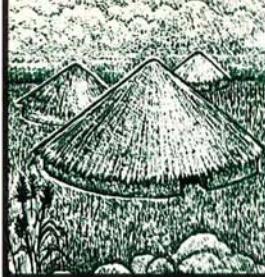
Meat included lamb, beef, pork, chicken, goose, and game such as venison, wild boar, pheasant, and grouse. Beef was rarely eaten since cattle formed the basis of wealth and were also useful as draft animals; however, a chieftain might slaughter some cattle for a particularly important feast. The wild boar was seen as a worthy opponent for Celtic warriors, who respected its strength, stamina, and ferocity; boar hunts were about more than just meat, and allowed warriors to prove themselves off the battlefield. Meat was either spit-roasted or stewed in great cauldrons which were always hanging over the fire.

Fish was a staple for coastal communities, and trout and salmon were a welcome addition to the diet of those Celts who had a suitable river or lake in their lands. Fish was normally grilled or stewed.

Grain was the main crop of Celtic farmers. Barley, oats, and wheat were grown throughout the Celtic world, and grain was consumed as bread or porridge and made into beer. Celtic bread would contain a certain amount of grit from the stone querns on which the grain was ground to flour, as well as the occasional fragment of ash and bark.

Cabbage, onions, turnips, and beets were the main vegetable crops, and fruits and nuts were gathered from the forest in season.

Dairy products were of great importance, as attested to by the fact that the milking cow was the standard by which high-value items were appraised. The Celts also made butter and cheese.



A Celtic hillfort at Danebury, England. Note the heavily-fortified entrance.

## Trade

Within the Celtic lands could be found enough timber, iron, copper, and tin to support their manufacturing needs. Because of this sufficiency in day-to-day needs, they traded almost exclusively for luxury goods from the Mediterranean world.

The Greeks and Romans traded with the Celts for metals—especially gold, silver, and tin—as well as slaves and surplus agricultural produce. At one time, Britain had a reputation as the best place in the world to obtain top-quality hunting dogs; these may have been an ancestor of the modern wolfhound and deerhound.

In exchange, the Mediterranean world offered wine—the strongest drink available in the Celtic world at this time, since distilling was not known in Europe until the Middle Ages—and high-quality prestige items such as jewelry, silver serving-dishes, and finely wrought silver and gilt-bronze goblets. These items moved considerable distances into the Celtic hinterland, by a combination of trade and gift-giving, and have been found in places where no Greek or Roman ever set foot.

The earliest major trading sites sprang up along the river Danube, which remained for some time as the boundary between the Mediterranean and

Celtic worlds. As the Romans advanced into Gaul, oppida began to appear in Britain, but had no time to develop fully as Britain was conquered and the Celtic oppida gave way to Roman provincial towns. Once Roman domination over Celtic lands was established, the face of trade changed forever.

## Law

For all their fierce and wild reputation, the Celts had a detailed legal system, and some of the earliest surviving fragments of Celtic literature are law-codes rather than heroic sagas.

The details of Celtic law varied widely from time to time and place to place, so it is not possible to give exact details of crimes and penalties here. The following notes are intended as general guidelines, and the DM who is interested in researching further will find a good starting point in the books listed at the end of Chapter 2.

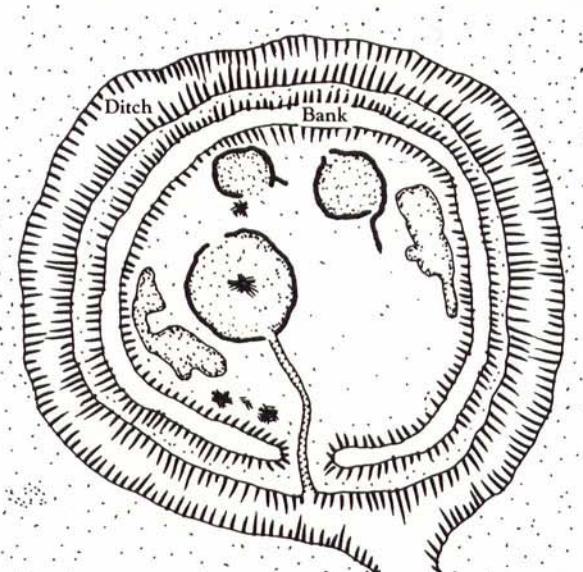
## The Priesthood

The power of the priestly class was based as much on their legal function as on their religious position. The druids and bards, together with other priestly types, were the repositories of the whole



### a small celtic farm

A small farm with round huts in a ditch and bank enclosure



The channel from the large hut to the gate was probably an open drain. The scoops may have been garbage pits.

of the Celtic oral tradition, including the laws. Classical authors state that the druids were judges as well as priests, and surviving Celtic literature emphasizes their judicial function, downplaying references to the pre-Christian religion.

In Ireland, there seems to have been a class of professional jurists called *brithem*, who were probably regarded as being part of the priesthood. Caesar, perhaps following the lead of earlier commentators, notes that the Gaulish druids commanded the greatest punishment that could be inflicted: to deny a man the right to participate in rituals, effectively casting him out from the rest of society. It seems likely that the druids of the rest of the Celtic world had a similar power.

### Kinship

A major part of the Celtic legal system was the fact that the kinship group was responsible for the actions of its members. A plaintiff did not go directly to the defendant for compensation, but to his kin, clan, or tribe. Any case involved the kin on both sides, not just the individuals who were directly involved. Because of this, kin might act to prevent one of their members from doing something which could result in a dispute, for it was the

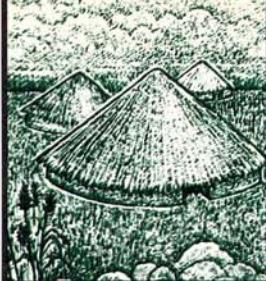
kindred group as a whole who would be liable for any fine or compensation.

Outside the boundaries of his own tribal lands, an individual could not count on the law to protect him unless there was some reciprocal agreement between the tribes involved—as, for example, when one tribe or leader was subject to another. The *aes dana*—including the priestly class—seem to have been sacrosanct wherever they went, and they are the only stratum of Celtic society that seems to have traveled widely at all.

The importance of kin is also seen in the complexity of the laws surrounding inheritance and marriage, which set out in detail exactly who is entitled to what proportion of an estate, which circumstances might alter anyone's entitlement, and so on. The details vary widely from time to time and place to place, but the emphasis on being able to calculate these things exactly is constant throughout the Celtic world.

### Conducting a Case

It seems that most disputes were taken before a king or chieftain, who referred it to his priests for judgment according to the established laws and traditions.



Evidence was given under oath, and the law-codes went into considerable detail over the value of a man's oath, which varied based on his social status. According to some codes, a farmer could swear oaths up to a value of six sets, while the lowest king could swear for up to seven cumals.

Some cases could be settled simply by one side obtaining a greater value of oaths in its favor than the other side, although some law-codes stated that a king's oath could never be oversworn—so cases were always settled by a king's decision.

The value of oaths, and other aspects of personal honor, are discussed in **Appendix 1**.

### Redress and Punishment

Most cases could be redressed by payment of a fine or compensation, and early law-codes go into considerable detail over the assessment of a man's worth. Like the later Saxon *wergild* and Viking *mannaestr*, each individual had a value which was used to determine just compensation for wrongs done to them. The priestly class alone had the knowledge to decide on the amount of a fine or compensation and probably decided victory and defeat, as well.

Some crimes—mostly moral crimes like treason and blasphemy, where monetary compensation to an individual or clan could not redress the situation—were punishable by banishment or death.

Roman authors write with horror of the Gauls' using condemned prisoners for human sacrifice (conveniently forgetting the torture and mutilation which their own legal system mandated), and it is possible that those guilty of religious crimes such as stealing from sacred groves might have been forced to atone to the gods by being sacrificed.

Banishment did not involve casting a person out from the tribe's territory, but simply denying that individual any part in religious rituals. In religious terms, this punishment was much like excommunication is for Catholics, and the banished person was shunned by all, even kin.

### Religion

More than three hundred names of Celtic deities are known from inscriptions and literary references, but the Celts had far fewer than three hundred gods. The same deity might have been known by a different name to the Gauls, the Britons, the Welsh, the Scots, and the Irish, for instance. Beyond the major deities, each tribe acknowledged a body of nature-

spirits and similar minor deities residing in springs, rivers, mountains, and other prominent geographical features within their territory.

Despite the work of classical authors, archaeological finds of temples and religious inscriptions, and pagan traces in surviving Celtic literature, our understanding of Celtic religion and the Celtic pantheon remains very unclear. There was apparently a great deal of regional variation, making it impossible to produce a coherent view of Celtic religion as a whole. The following notes are necessarily generalized, but they will help the DM produce a religious background which fills the needs of his particular campaign.

### Gods and Followers

Unlike normal AD&D® game priests, the Celts did not each pick a single deity to serve; they worshipped all of them, calling upon individual deities for specific problems. The druids served the entire pantheon of Celtic deities, and this is reflected in the amended rules for them in **Chapters 2 and 4**.

### Legends & Lore

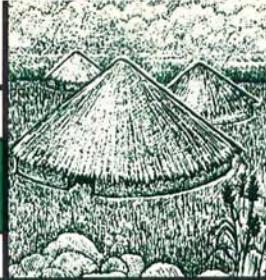
The treatment of Celtic deities in the AD&D 2nd Edition *Legends & Lore* rule book is suitable for a generalized Celtic fantasy campaign but needs some expansion and clarification for a more historically-based setup.

Lugh, Oghma, Goibhniu, Daghdha, and Dianecht are all members of the Tuatha De Danann who are discussed later in this section. Of the others, Arawn and Math Mathonwy are known only from Welsh tradition, the Morrigan from Irish tradition, and Manannan Mac Lir from both. Belenus (also known as Bel or Belenos) is a Gaulish and British deity, and Brigantia is the patron deity of the tribe of the Brigantes, who lived in northwest England until Roman times.

### Teutates

The principal deity of the Gauls seems to have been Teutates, also known as Touatis. His name is linguistically connected to the Celtic word *tuath*, meaning a tribe, and he seems to have stood for the strength of the tribe. It is likely that each tribe had its own patron deity, or its own aspect of Teutates. Teutates seems very similar to the Irish Daghdha.

For game purposes, Teutates appears in avatar form as a Celtic noble, dressed in the local fashion



and armed with gold scale mail, a gold-faced shield and helmet, and a golden sword and spear. His alignment is neutral, and he is concerned with the well-being of the tribe in whose lands the avatar appears. The avatar functions as a fighter 15/druid 15. The DM may decide on other details according to the needs of the campaign.

### Ogmios

The Irish Oghma was related to a Gallic god named Ogmios, who was a deity of eloquence. This deity seems to have been widespread throughout the Celtic world, and classical authors record the importance of eloquence and persuasive speaking among the Celts. The description of Oghma in *Legends & Lore* will suffice for Ogmios, apart from the symbol; Celtic deities rarely had symbols.

### Epona

Epona was a deity who was worshipped throughout Gaul and Britain, and her main concerns were fertility and horses. The description of Brigantia in *Legends & Lore* is a good basis for a game treatment of Epona; she is usually portrayed with a mare or foal, and her symbol is a horn of plenty, a shepherd's crook, or a bunch of fruit.

Epona's interest in horses made her a favorite with later Gallo-Roman cavalry units, but the Celts never saw her as a deity of horses alone.

### Lugh

Lugh was a major deity in Irish lore and particularly famed for his mastery of all skills and crafts. Roman writers mention a "Gaulish Mercury" who seems to be similar, although they neglect to mention the Celtic name of this deity.

### Diancecht

If Lugh can be equated with the "Gaulish Mercury," then the so-called "Gaulish Apollo" mentioned by classical writers seems very similar to Diancecht, the legendary healer of the Tuatha De Danann. Gaulish names for this deity include Borvo, Bormo, Bormanus, and Grannos.

### War-Gods

Classical authors also mention a "Gaulish Mars," and with the Celtic love of fighting it is not surprising that several names appear alongside that of Mars in Gallo-Roman inscriptions. Segomo, Belandon, Bel, Belutacadrus, Camulos, Cumhail, Ru-



dianos, Dunates, and Leherennus are just a few. Some scholars even see Belenos as a war-god.

There are several war-goddesses in the Celtic pantheon as well. The Morrigan is the best-known, and plays a major role in Irish legend; others include Andarta, Andrasta (who was invoked by Boudicca when the Iceni rose against Rome), and Nemetona, who may be a protector of sacred groves presented in a martial aspect. The Morrigan as presented in *Legends & Lore* is an adequate basis for all these deities.

### Goibhniu

The whole of the Celtic world seems to have had a smith-god, whom the Roman writers equated with Vulcan (the Greek Hephaestus). This deity had the name Gobannon in Wales, and was probably the same as the Irish Goibhniu.

### Belisama

Belisama seems to have been a female counterpart of the smith-god, and may be the same as the Irish Brigid who later became St. Bridget. Roman authors equated her with Minerva (the Greek Athena). She was a patron deity of the metalworking arts and probably would have been invoked when starting out to make an item which was intended to be beautiful as much as practical.

### Taranis

Taranis was a Gaulish deity of the weather whose name means "thunderer." As such, the Roman writers equated Taranis with Jupiter (the Greek Zeus), although his position in the Celtic religion was not as prominent as that of Jupiter in the Roman pantheon. Taranis's emblem is a wheel, and he is often portrayed on horseback, crushing some kind of monster. He seems closer to the Norse Thor than the Roman Jupiter.

### Silvanus and Cernunnos

A deity of nature, Silvanus was much invoked in inscriptions found in Gaul and Britain, and seems to have power over the hunt and all activities that take place in a "sylvan" setting. The name is Latin, and although there is no doubt that the deity himself is Celtic, we have no trace of a Celtic name. Some scholars have suggested that Silvanus was Cernunnos—"the horned one"—whose name was held by some Celts as too holy to pronounce.

Cernunnos is a shadowy figure, apparently representing the Celts' awe of nature and the unseen supernatural threats that could abide in the forest; he survived to the Middle Ages in England as Herne the Hunter and is sometimes equated with the Master of the Wild Hunt.

### The Tuatha De Danann

In Irish myth, the Tuatha De Danann ("the tribe of the goddess Danu") is one wave of invaders to occupy Ireland, conquering it from the Firbolg and then being forced out by the Milesians.

Although they were not themselves divine, the members of the Tuatha De Danann were of divine descent and were highly skilled in magic and the other arts. During one phase of Irish myth, they are mortal heroes, larger than life, but no more so than the heroes of some Greek myths.

After they were defeated by the Milesians, the bulk of the Tuatha De Danann withdrew to Tir Nan Og, on the condition that certain rituals be conducted in their honor from that day on. The great heroes of the Tuatha De Danann, characters like the Daghdha, Lugh, Oghma, Goibhniu and Diancecht, became deities by this process, and those of the Tuatha De Danann who remained in the mortal world became the Sidhe (see Chapter 5).

The individual DM must decide how to treat the relationship between the Tuatha De Danann, the gods, and the Sidhe in his campaign.

### Spirits of Place

In addition to the major deities, the Celts worshipped—or at least, conducted rituals to appease—a range of spirits and demigods. Many places and geographical features were thought to have patron spirits, which seem to have been similar to the *kami* of Japan in many respects.

Patron deities of tribes have already been mentioned, and springs, wells, and rivers were all thought to have a patron spirit. A Romano-British shrine to the spring-goddess Coventina at Carrawburgh near Hadrian's Wall almost certainly continued an observance which started with the Celts, and modern well-dressing traditions in parts of England have been overlain with a veneer of Christianity, but are pagan British celebrations at heart. The river Yonne in Gaul was under the care of a minor deity called Icaunus, and the Puy de Dome had a patron deity called Dumias.

There were many others, and it is almost impos-



sible to set down any firm rules for them all. The rules for demigods in *Legends & Lore* require some adjustment, but are a good starting point. Spirits of place seldom have any planar travel ability, and their sensing ability extends to one-half mile from their specified place; in the case of river deities, this is one-half mile on either side of the banks. They can also sense any event which will impact upon their place, no matter how distant. Individual rules and statistics should be determined by the DM, bearing in mind the type of place, the rank of the patron spirit, and importance to the campaign.

## Temples and Sacred Groves

Little is known about Celtic temples. Many structures have been found that archaeologists have interpreted as temples, but their forms and other details are so diverse that it is impossible to see any overall pattern. There are a few things that can be said for certain, however.

First, the Celts never used stone circles or other megalithic monuments as temples. These monuments are the products of an earlier Neolithic and Bronze Age people and were built at least a thousand years before the Celts spread across Europe. The Celts would have regarded them with the same superstitious awe as later peoples, and in many Celtic lands, monuments such as stone circles and round barrows are linked with the Sidhe and other supernatural forces. As such, they would probably have been avoided for fear of provoking the wrath of their supposed inhabitants.

Classical authors mention sacred groves, and these seem to have been a feature of Celtic religion throughout Europe. Sacred groves in the forest were places of sacrifice, and some were said to contain vast piles of treasure—a share of the spoils given to the gods in thanks for their help in battle. Human and animal sacrifices were also made in these places, and some Roman authors write with horror of the grisly spectacle they present, with the bodies of sacrificial victims hanging from almost every tree. They also note that the treasure left in a sacred grove was always safe, for no one dared steal it in fear of angering the gods.

Springs, rivers, and lakes could also be places of sacrifice, and some of the greatest artistic treasures of Celtic Europe have been recovered from such places. A half-size bronze-faced shield—one of the finest pieces of Celtic bronzework known—came from the river Thames near Battersea in west Lon-

don; many scholars think it was too small to have been intended for use, and was made as a sacrifice to the patron spirit of the Thames.

Temple structures are extremely diverse and offer little information about the Celtic religion. A rectangular wooden building found on the site of Heathrow Airport near London was interpreted as a temple, but most other Celtic temples found in Britain are circular, like Celtic houses. In Gaul, supposed temples are circular, square, polygonal, and even cross-shaped. In all cases, the groundplan of the structure was echoed by a series of wooden posts, which may have supported a roof, making a colonnade around the outside of the temple.

In the southern half of France, a very distinctive ritual feature has been found at a number of sites. Stone pillars, and in some cases whole doorways, have been found with oval niches containing human skulls. The ritual importance of head-taking has been mentioned briefly in previous chapters, and these structures seem to represent more than mere trophy cases. Classical authors mention the Gauls' barbaric practice of hanging the heads of enemies from the beams of their houses.

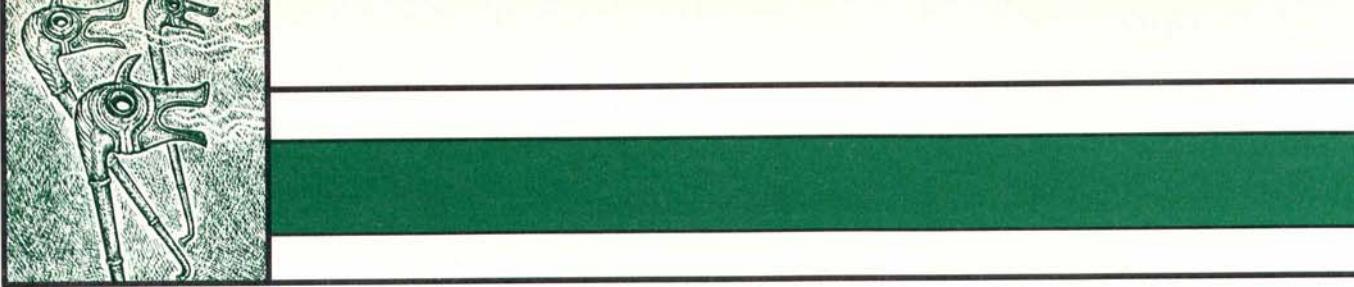
## Religious Practices

Apart from the sacrifices that so shocked classical authors, almost nothing is known of the religious rituals of the Celts, and it could be that, like the Vikings, the Celts did not generally express their religious beliefs through rituals.

There were four great festivals in the Celtic year, marking the beginning of each season. Samhain marked the beginning of the year and was celebrated around November 1st. This was traditionally a time when the natural and supernatural worlds were very close together. Imbolc marked the start of Spring, was celebrated around February 1st, and seems to have been a fertility festival.

Beltaine was celebrated around May 1st and had to do with the well-being of the herds. Livestock was driven between two large bonfires (the name beltaine means "the fire of Bel") to drive off evil influences. Lughnasadh, the beginning of Fall, was celebrated around August 1st and was connected with the god Lugh.

It is thought that these festivals were marked by feasting and perhaps by clan assemblies; like medieval saint's-day fairs, they were probably times to renew old acquaintances and share news.



## A Brief Gazetteer

In the Celtic setting, as in any other AD&D® game milieu, the player characters are going to travel to other lands and meet people from other cultures. This chapter provides a brief description of the many lands, both real and imaginary, that make up the world of a Celtic campaign. The "real" places described in this chapter can be found on the players' map (the large map sheet bound in the back of this book) or the other detailed maps included in this book.

The fold-out map is based on a number of references in surviving Celtic literature. Some sagas feature long journeys to places like Greece and Scythia, and the Irish trace their descent from various groups of invaders from Greece, Scythia, and other distant places. It is still thought possible today that the 6th-century Irish monk St. Brendan reached America before the Vikings, and earlier Welsh tales of Prince Morgan also tell of an expedition to a strange land in the west.

### The Lands of the Celts

#### Albu

Albu was the Celtic name for Britain; as Romans and then Saxons conquered the part which is now England, the name Albu came to apply to Scotland. The southern and eastern parts of Britain are fertile lowland and easily conquered; the northern and western parts are higher and more rugged.

The southern and eastern tribes of Britain had trading contacts with the coastal tribes of Gaul and were the wealthiest in terms of cattle and gold. The northern and western tribes had a reputation for being tougher and resisted the Roman and Saxon conquerors for longer. In the century or so before the Roman invasion of A.D. 43, the strongest tribe in Britain was the Catuvellauni, who controlled most of southern England, either directly or through client tribes. In the time of Julius Caesar (around 50 B.C.), their capital was at Wheathampstead, but this later moved to Colchester, which would become the first capital of Roman Britain. Hilltop forts were common throughout Britain, and there was a major seaport at Hengistbury Head, trading mainly with the Mediterranean world.

The mineral springs at Bath and Buxton are known to have been sacred to the Celts, and there may have been shrines at other springs and wells. The major rivers were regarded as divine, especially the Thames and the Severn, the two largest river systems in Britain.

#### Brittany

When the Saxons were conquering Britain in the 5th century A.D., not all of the Celtic population was pushed back into the north and west. Some refugees sailed from southwest England and settled in the rugged coastal area of Armorica. There had always been links between southern Britain and the Atlantic seaboard of Gaul, and the area settled by the British refugees became known as Brittany. Shortly after this time, Brittany, like the rest of Gaul, came under the rule of the Frankish kings, so Brittany cannot truly be said to have had a free Celtic existence.

#### Cymru

The Romans pinned Wales down with a chain of forts and legionary bases but never truly conquered this wild and mountainous country. When the Saxons invaded Britain, they were halted at the Welsh borders, and it was not until the 13th century that England was able to conquer Wales.

Most of Wales consists of mountain and moorland fit only for sheep and goats, but the sheltered valleys support some agriculture, and the fertile isle of Mon (modern Anglesey) has good farming. Mon was a sacred island, and when the Romans attacked Wales, they encountered the stiffest resistance of the campaign. Some scholars believe that Boudicca's rebellion was timed to delay the Roman campaigns by creating a disturbance in the rear of the Roman forces.

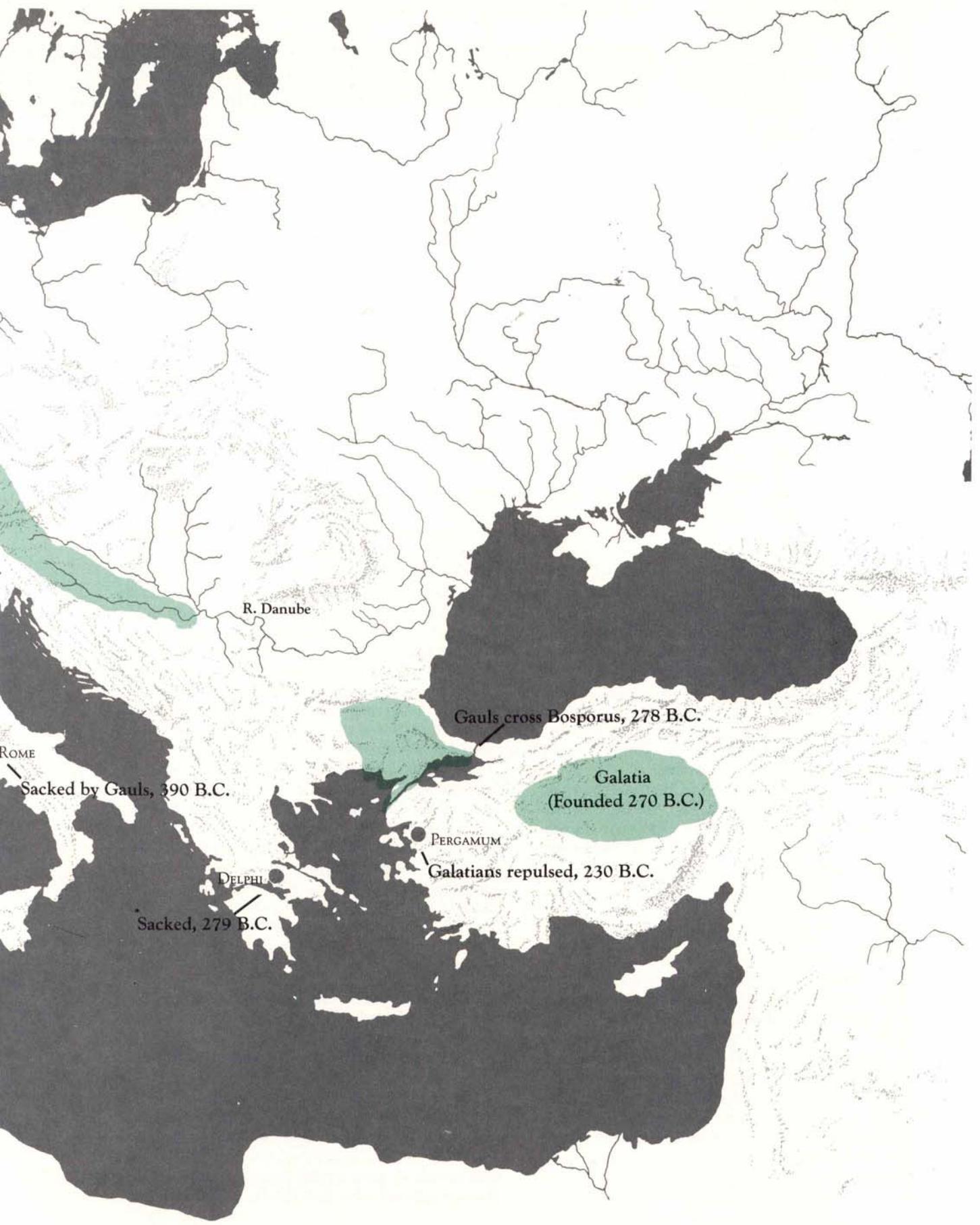
Wales is best known today for its mineral wealth; coal was a novelty to Roman visitors, who wrote with awe of a black stone which burned and gave heat but was not consumed by the fire. Copper was found in several parts of Wales; gold was mined at Dolau Cothi in pre-Roman times, and the conquerors took over the operation.

Wales is the setting for most of *The Mabinogion*, which is one of the major surviving bodies of Celtic literature. It is clear from these stories that the Welsh raided and traded with the Irish frequently—the Irish Sea was more of a roadway than a barrier.

In Roman times, the two major tribes of Wales were the Silures in the south and the Ordovices in the north; by the time of *The Mabinogion* (which may reflect events in the Dark Ages and was first written down in the 13th century), Wales consisted of six Celtic kingdoms plus the island of Mon: Gwynedd in the north, Powys and Keredigywain in



Shaded areas indicate Celtic settlement





the middle, and Dyfed, Ystrad Tywi, and Morgannwg in the south.

### Eriu

Ireland was one of the few parts of the Celtic world never to be attacked by the Romans. There were four kingdoms: Ulster in the north, Connacht in the west, Leinster in the southeast, and Munster in the southwest.

Ireland's fertile central lowlands are dotted with peat bogs, and in some areas dried peat is a traditional fuel. The lowlands are surrounded by several low mountain ranges, but fully two-thirds of the land can be used for agriculture or pasture. The climate of Europe was milder in the early part of the Celtic period than it is at present, and more land may have been usable for farming at that time.

Ireland's main river systems are: the Shannon, running southwest through Connacht and Munster; the Erne, running northwest through Ulster; and the Boyne, running east to the Irish Sea. The Boyne, especially the area of Brug na Boinne ("the bend of the Boyne," near modern Drogheda) had been an area of religious significance since pre-Celtic times, and the hill of Tara in County Meath was a major political and religious center up until the 6th century A.D. Emain Macha, the site of the court of Ulster, and Cruachan, the court of Connacht, were also important centers.

The conversion of Ireland to Christianity began in the mid-5th century A.D., and the bulk of the surviving Irish stories were written down in the 6th and 7th centuries by Christian monks. In the 9th century, Ireland was invaded by Norwegian Vikings, and after two centuries of fighting the Irish were subdued.

### Galatia

The Celts spread eastward as well as westward in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. Celts raided Greece, sacking the shrine of Delphi in 279 B.C. and crossing the Bosphorus in the following year. In 270, they were settled by the King of Bithynia into an area of Asia Minor that became known as Galatia. These people were the Galatians of the New Testament and survived as a recognizable ethnic and linguistic group into the 4th century A.D. Attalus I repelled the Galatians from Pergamum in 230 B.C.

### Gaul

The area which the Romans called Gaul occupied much of modern France and Belgium, extending into parts of Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. There were dozens of tribes in this vast area, and although Vercingetorix of the Arverni managed to hold together a fragile alliance of tribes to fight the Romans, there was very little true unity. Consequently, Caesar found it easy to conquer Gaul piecemeal. The Belgae were an alliance of northern tribes which had links with Britain and, according to Caesar, included some of the most powerful tribes in Gaul.

As might be expected, such a large area included many sacred sites and other points of interest. Certain peaks of the Lower Pyrenees were sacred, as was the Puy de Dome in the Massif Central. Temples have been discovered throughout the area. The river Seine (Sequana) was sacred and probably had a temple at its source. The Roman general Caepio plundered a series of sacred groves and sacred lakes in the neighborhood of Toulouse in 106 B.C., and there seems to have been at least one sacred place in the territory of each tribe where such sacrifices were made. According to Caesar, the Druids of Gaul held an annual assembly in a sacred grove in the territory of the Carnutes; some historians doubt this statement, but, if it existed, this would be the most sacred place in Gaul.

The Greeks had been in contact with the Celts before the Romans, and the city of Marseilles was founded as the Greek trading colony of Massalia around 600 B.C. Massalia was part of an extensive network of Greek trading posts throughout the Mediterranean. Lugdunum, modern Lyons, was the major center for southern Gaul in pre-Roman times as today, and other major settlements included Avaricum (modern Bourges) and Lutetia (Paris).

### Iberia

The Iberian peninsula consists of modern Spain and Portugal, and was first settled by the Celts in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. Roman historians tell us that the Iberians were very similar to the Celts of Aquitaine.

The province of Hispania was added to the growing Roman empire in the second century B.C., after a series of vicious and indecisive campaigns matching Roman legions against Celtiberian guerrilla tactics. It took Scipio Africanus, the brilliant Roman general who had finally defeated Hanni-





bal, to break the deadlock in Spain. Hannibal had used large numbers of Spanish mercenaries in his attack on Italy, and had relied upon the cooperation of the Spanish as he made his way from North Africa to the Alps. In the aftermath of the Punic Wars, the conquest of Spain was as much a punitive war as an effort to secure Rome's borders.

The Celtiberians of Spain, like the Galatians in Asia Minor, were probably assimilated into the native population over the course of several centuries. The Romans encountered hill-forts and a tribal structure in Spain which were very similar to those they found in the rest of Celtic Europe, but the centuries of Roman rule, followed by Islamic domination in the Middle Ages, effectively wiped out any traces of Celtic culture.

Little is known about Spain and the Celtiberians before the Punic Wars. There are a few scattered passages in the writings of Greek geographers mentioning that the land was rich in grain, wine, and olive oil, but their detailed knowledge only extended as far as the Mediterranean coastline, which was far from the Celtic-settled areas. The Milesians are said to have traveled from Spain to settle in Ireland as the last of the legendary invaders; it could be that they were Celtiberians.

## The Picts

The area of modern Scotland was occupied by the Picts until the 5th century A.D.; the Scots of the time were Irish raiders who settled on Scotland's west coast and pushed the Picts steadily eastward. The Picts were a wild people, and according to Roman writers, they were even more primitive and barbaric than the Celts.

Unfortunately, almost no information survives about their culture, but they seem to have lived in partially-subterranean houses with turf roofs and walls of unmortared stone. They probably survived by a mixture of hunting, trapping, and small-scale farming, and Pictish warriors are said to have tattooed or painted themselves to look more terrifying in battle. The name "Picts" comes from a Latin word meaning "painted"; the name by which these people called themselves does not survive.

## Neighboring Lands

### Germania

The Germans were the eastern neighbors of the Celts, and it was the expansion of Germanic tribes

into Celtic lands in the second and first centuries B.C. that led to the Celtic migrations which, in their turn, led to the conquest of Gaul by Rome.

Roman writers make a sharp distinction between the Gauls and the Germans; if the Gauls are barbarians, then the Germans are outright savages. From archaeological and other evidence, though, it seems that the Germans were not too dissimilar culturally from the Celts, although they were a separate ethnic and linguistic group. Germanic peoples occupied much of the area east of the Rhine, from the Danube to Scandinavia. The most northern peoples were the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings.

The DM who is interested in the ancient Germans is recommended to the *Germania* of Tacitus and to Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, Books V and VI. Both are available in various translations. The Osprey series of military/historical reference books includes a volume on the Germans.

### Greece

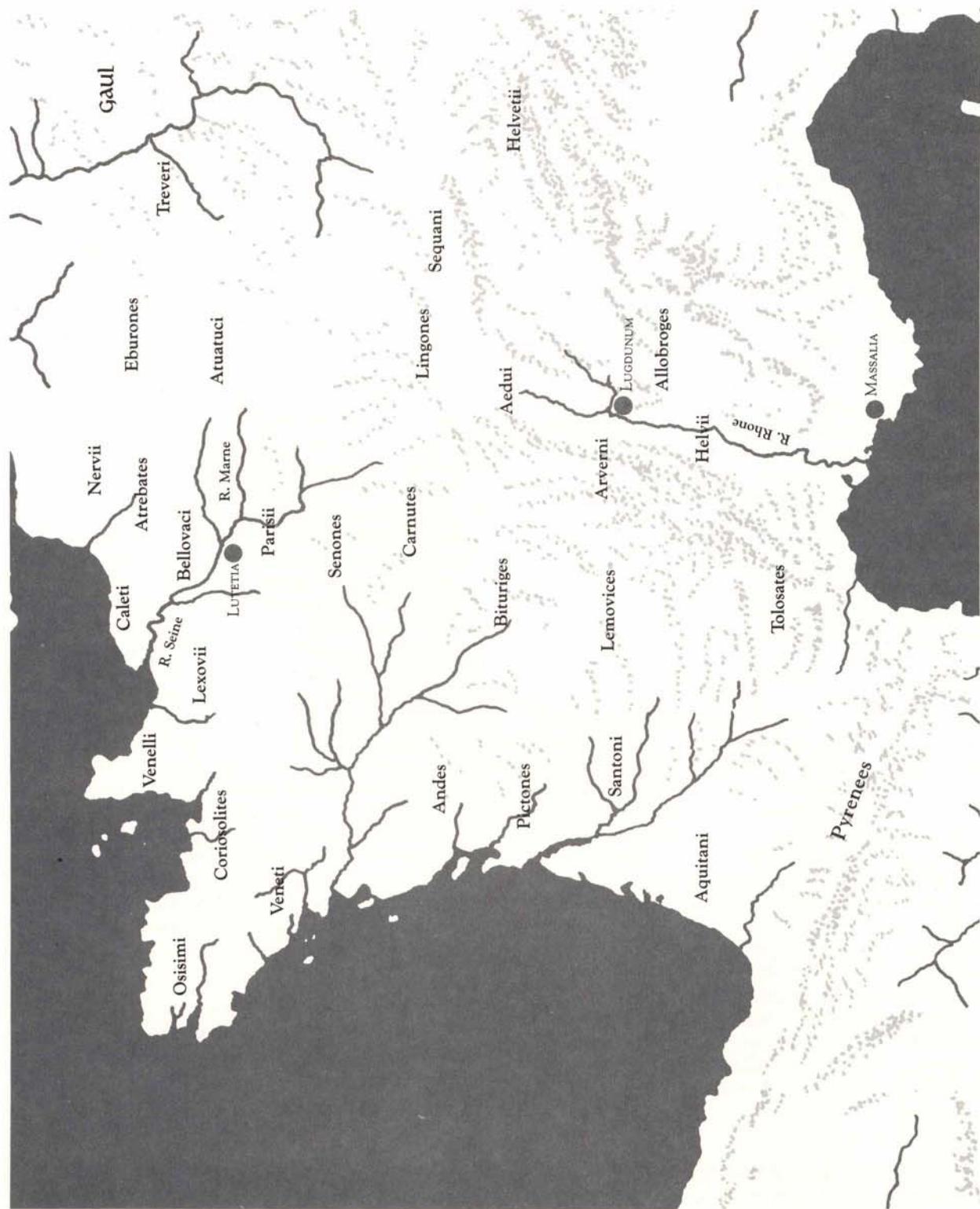
Greek culture permeated the whole of the area south of the Danube in the last few centuries before Christ. The golden age of the Greek city-state was over by the time the Celts expanded into Greece, but the spread of Greek culture through the conquests of Alexander the Great still remained. Greeks had been trading with the Celts for more than two centuries, and Greece was seen as a land of plenty, with powerful and sophisticated cities and luxury for all. This view may have been part of the reason for Celtic expansion into Greece.

The most famous incident was the raiding of the shrine at Delphi in 279 B.C., but the Celts had pillaged across the Danube into Thrace and Macedonia before. It was Alexander the Great who had asked Celtic envoys what they feared most. Expecting to hear that they feared his military power, He received instead the famous reply, "We fear only that the sky may fall and crush us, or that the earth may open and swallow us, or that the sea may rise and overwhelm us."

By the time Rome invaded Gaul and Britain, Greece was already under Rome's sway politically. Greek merchants traded throughout the Roman empire and beyond its borders to the Celts of Gaul and the Danube lands.

### Italia

There had been contact between Italy and the





Celtic world since Etruscan times, with trade running from the Etruria across the Tyrrhenian Sea and up the Rhone valley into Gaul and Germany. The importance of the Rhone valley to this trade is shown by the fact that Greek merchants later founded their trading colony of Massalia (modern Marseilles) near the mouth of the Rhone.

The Celts spread across the Alps in the 4th century B.C., occupying much of northern Italy. Around 390 B.C., a Celtic force sacked Rome and forced the Romans to pay them tribute, and it was not until the city of Rome gained effective control of Italy in the 3rd century B.C. that the Celts were prevented from raiding at will throughout the Italian peninsula. Even so, they continued to occupy the northernmost part of Italy, which became known as Gallia Cisalpina ("Gaul on this side of the Alps").

After the end of the 2nd century B.C., the Celts began to face the advance of Roman legions, and from that time on, almost all dealings between Italians and Celts took place on the battlefield.

To the unconquered Celts, Rome became a good market for slaves, and a source of luxury goods such as wine and objects of silver and gold. However, trade nearly always gave way to conquest. To the Irish and Scots, who stayed out of Rome's reach, Rome was imagined as an immense fortress with a king who ruled in the Celtic manner.

## Scythia

Scythia was the land to the north of the Black Sea, on the edge of the Steppes. The Scythians were horse-nomads, and some scholars believe that the Celts learned the use of horses and chariots from them. The Scythians likely came to southern Russia around 700 B.C., and spread into modern Hungary, where they first encountered the Celts.

Like the Celts, the Scythians were fond of jewelry and lavishly decorated items; although some groups had become more or less settled by the 5th century B.C., the Scythians were still a nomadic culture and wealth had to be portable. Their saddles and horse-trappings were particularly splendid.

Celtic dealings with the Scythians seems to have been restricted to occasional raiding and the spread of ideas. The Greeks and Romans regarded both peoples as equally barbaric.

## Imaginary Lands

In addition to the real lands that the Celts visited or heard of, there were various places recorded in

the Celtic tradition which are purely imaginative. Very few of these lands are described in any detail in the surviving Celtic literature, and even the locations of some of them are vague. Some seem to exist in the same space as the "real" Celtic world, forming parallel dimensions.

There is very little consistency in the accounts of these places in the surviving literature, and some of the descriptions below present more than one version of a place. The DM should treat these as options, choosing whatever suits the campaign and the location best.

## Faerie Worlds and Afterworlds

The Welsh Annwlyn, the Irish Tir Nan Og, and the lands of the Sidhe have all been described by some scholars as lands of the dead, but in the surviving literature they appear to be more like parallel worlds, and for the purposes of a Celtic campaign it is preferable to treat them as such.

Classical authors all agree that the Gauls believed in reincarnation rather than an afterlife, which makes lands of the dead like the Norse Valhalla or the Greek Hades useless—if everyone is reincarnated, there is no one to go to the land of the dead.

The name of Annwlyn (see below) may be derived from a Welsh or British word meaning "beyond," and some scholars have described it as the land of the dead, but in Pwyll's visit there is nothing to suggest that he has entered the afterlife and then returned to the land of the living. Throughout worldwide mythology, no visit to the land of the dead is complete without an encounter with at least one famous dead person, and Pwyll encounters no ancestors or legendary heroes.

There is one mention of "the demons of Annwlyn" in the story of "How Culhwch Won Olwen," but this appears to be a later Christian invention; the early Christians equated all mythological parallel worlds with hell, since they were neither heaven nor earth.

## Annwlyn

Also known as Annwn, Annwlyn is mentioned in Welsh lore, and sometimes—especially in later folklore—the name is used as just another name for the faerie realm. The best description of Annwlyn is in "Pwyll, Lord of Dyved," the first tale in *The Mabinogion*.

In this story, Pwyll meets with a noble stranger while hunting in the forest, who turns out to be



Arawn, the king of Annwlyn. The two exchange places for a year, and Pwyll rids Arawn of his bitter rival, Havgan.

Annwlyn seems to border on Pwyll's realm of Dyved, but it is not possible to find it unless guided by a native. This suggests that it is a parallel world, which can only be entered through a few well-hidden gateways. It is not a single realm, for Havgan is also a king of Annwlyn, whose realm borders on Arawn's; the tradition of raiding and border conflict seems to be as current in this world as it is in the "real" world of the Celts.

Everything in Annwlyn is much as it is in the real world but better. Arawn's court is not so strange that Pwyll has trouble finding his way about, but it is more splendid than anything he has ever seen. Life is an endless round of hunts, feasts, and other pleasant activities, and all the inhabitants of Annwlyn are prosperous and attractive. Interestingly, the story of "Math Son of Mathonwy" states that pigs came from Annwlyn as a gift from Arawn to Pwyll's son Pryderi and implies that they were previously unknown in the "real" world.

It could be that Annwlyn is one of the realms occupied by the Sidhe. Arawn's hunting-dogs were white with red ears—a characteristic of Sidhe animals—and the descriptions of the splendors of Annwlyn and its inhabitants all match with descriptions of the Tuatha De Danann and the Sidhe.

## Avalon

The British tradition of the Isle of Avalon seems to go back to Celtic lore, pre-dating the stories of King Arthur with which it is now most strongly associated. Like Tir Nan Og (see below) it is in the west, but it seems to be nearer since the mortally wounded Arthur seems able to reach it in a small boat without a long journey. It could be that, like Annwlyn, the island is close to the mortal world but its entrance is magically hidden.

Avalon may well have been very much like Tir Nan Og, and Arthur might have gone there so that his mortal wound would not be the death of him; a legend persists that he will return when Britain is gravely threatened, and if time passes in Avalon as it does in Tir Nan Og, then he might well be able to do so. On the other hand, it could be that Avalon was a land of the dead, and Arthur went there to join the other great heroes of the past.

## Sidhe

As well as referring to the race themselves, the word Sidhe could also mean the land in which they dwelt. The full name of the surviving Tuatha De Danann was aes Sidhe, meaning "the mound people," and they were supposed to have made their homes in the great burial mounds which can be seen in many parts of western Europe.

These mounds date mainly to the bronze age, some 600-700 years before the Celtic expansion, and are about the same age as the stone circles and other megalithic remains which the Celts attributed to supernatural races of giants and wizards such as the Tuatha De Danann.

While they appeared as grass-covered mounds to mortal eyes, these structures covered magnificent halls filled with feasting and music. Sometimes the sounds of merriment could be heard from within, but it was impossible to find an entrance. At other times, an entrance could only be found by someone who was invited, and on other occasions still, the whole mound was raised up on pillars revealing the hall underneath.

Time in a Sidhe mound could pass differently from time outside, so that a mortal leaving after a night's feasting might find that a hundred years had passed in the mortal world. He might age instantly upon setting foot outside, or he might remain the same age and find that everyone he knew was long dead and his own name was just a dim memory.

Space sometimes works differently inside a Sidhe mound, as well. It might be possible to fit a vast palace with a huge feasting-hall, kitchens, royal and guest apartments, and any number of other rooms, inside or beneath a mound only 40 or 50 feet across. It could be that, like Annwlyn (see above), these Sidhe dwellings existed in a parallel dimension, where time and space are different from the mortal world. Perhaps it might be possible to enter Annwlyn through a Sidhe mound, or perhaps each dwelling is a sealed parallel dimension all to itself.

## Tir Nan Og

Tir Nan Og is the land to which the Tuatha De Danann withdrew after surrendering Ireland to the Milesians and lies somewhere over the sea to the west of Ireland. Its name translates as "the land of the ever young," and like the Welsh Annwlyn, it is sometimes seen as an afterworld or simply a faerieland.



There are no detailed descriptions of Tir Nan Og; sometimes it is described as a group of islands and sometimes simply as a "land." Its greatest difference with the "real" world (and with Annwlyn) is the way in which time passes. A century in Tir Nan Og seems like a minute, and people there never age at all.

Otherwise, Tir Nan Og seems like most other Sidhe and faerie realms, in that it is an idealized Celtic paradise. Feasting and fighting are the favorite pastimes, the meadows are always abloom with flowers, the rivers flow with mead, the food and drink are the best in the world, and all the inhabitants are beautiful. Those killed in fighting come to life the next day, like the Einherjar in Valhalla.

Tir Nan Og is such a place that few people who go there would ever want to leave. Those who do will need some kind of magic to preserve them, for as soon as they set foot on the land of the "real" world the passing of the centuries catches up with them and they age instantly. In many stories, visitors are sent back on a white horse with orders not to dismount until something has happened. The condition can vary: a small dog (also from Tir Nan Og) might have to leap down from the rider's lap first, for instance, or the rider might never be able to leave the horse and be condemned to wander forever.

The true inhabitants of Tir Nan Og, on the other hand, seem able to come and go as they please, and it could be that Sidhe blood provides some protection against this effect. The DM might decide that a character with the birth-gift of Sidhe blood (see Chapter 3) is permitted a saving throw vs. death magic in order to avoid the aging effect.

## Other Imaginary Lands

The surviving Irish and Welsh stories feature a wide range of imaginary lands, nearly all of them without names. Voyagers such as Bran, Mael Duin, and St. Brendan encounter any number of mysterious and supernatural islands, and several warriors find themselves in strange magical fortresses which foreshadow the magical places in the later Arthurian romances.

These locations are not described here, since they only appear in one story each and therefore seem to have been invented specially for the story rather than forming part of the Celtic world-view. The section on Magical Places in Chapter 4 provides guidelines and examples for the DM who is interested in including such places in a campaign.



# Enech (Optional)

1

Honor was very dear to the Celts, and a man's reputation was worth more to him than his life. These optional rules offer a way to take honor into account in a Celtic campaign.

The Celtic word for honor was *enech*, which meant "face." Enech was a mixture of courage, honesty, integrity, loyalty, and physical prowess—all the things that the Celts valued. A character might be a king, or the greatest warrior in the world, and yet be held in contempt for want of *enech*.

*Enech* is something a character earns through his actions, like experience points. Unlike experience points, though, *enech* can also be lost. It is easier to lose than gain, so characters must always bear in mind the consequences of their actions. The higher a character's *enech*, the better others will treat him and the more willing they will be to listen to him. He will be greeted with gifts instead of rebuffs.

*Enech* is not related to good or evil, and a character's alignment does not affect his honor. A cruel villain might have a high *enech* score and a good warrior might have a low one. Some people bend the rules of society to their own ends, while others are moved to break them by higher duties.

Players must keep track of their character's honor by recording *enech* points.

## Starting Enech

All characters start with a certain amount of *enech*. Starting *enech* comes partly from the character's chosen class, and partly from birth gifts (see Chapter 3). Table 16 shows how to find the starting *enech* for a character.

Table 16: Initial Enech

Character Class	Base Enech
Bard	15
Druid	20
Fighter	10
Manteis	15
Ranger	15
Thief	1d6 + 4
Character Gift	Enech Adjustment
Kinless	-10
Ugly	-1
Handsome	+1
Status	+5
Mixed Blood, sidhe	+3
Mixed Blood, fomorian	-3
Riastarthaе	+3

No character can have a starting *enech* lower than 1. Results of 0 or less are treated as 1.

## Gaining and Losing Enech

During the course of play, a character's actions can cause him to gain or lose *enech* points. *Enech* points are always awarded by the DM, and the DM's judgement is final. At the end of each adventure or major encounter the DM awards *enech* points to characters who have handled themselves honorably, and takes them away from characters who have not. Characters do not automatically earn *enech* points for every adventure or every action—only certain things can affect the score.

It is impossible to list every circumstance which might affect a character's *enech*. Table 17 lists common deeds and circumstances; the DM must rely on his own judgement, using the table as a guideline, in situations which are not covered.

## Effects of Enech

As a character gains and loses *enech*, certain advantages and disadvantages automatically come into play. Some are highly beneficial, and others can be devastating.

First, if a character ever allows his *enech* to fall below zero—no matter what the circumstances—that character is out of the game. The player should discard the character sheet and begin a new character. Alternatively—if the DM permits—the character might be allowed to continue, but will be rejected by his kindred and cast out by his tribe. He is treated as kinless (see p. 77), with the appropriate adjustment to his *enech*, and suffers NPC reaction roll modifiers as detailed below. An outcast's life is a hard one, but there is a chance that he might be able to redeem himself by some outstanding deed.

For every 10 *enech* points a character has above the starting *enech* for his character class (not including adjustments for birth gifts), he gains a +5% bonus on all NPC reaction rolls with members of Celtic society. For every 3 points a character has below the starting *enech* for his character class, he suffers a -5% penalty on all such reaction rolls.

When a character receives 75 *enech* points, he receives a gift from a powerful NPC known to him—normally his chieftain or the king of his tribe. This might be a finely-decorated weapon, shield, or helmet, a gold arm-ring, or some similar gift. The char-



acter, of course, is expected to respond, either with a gift or by serving the gift-giver.

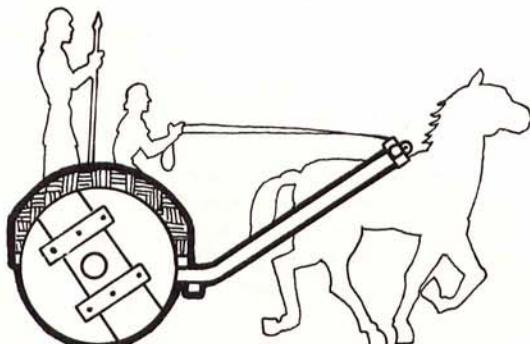
When a character amasses 80 enech points, bards other than those of his own clan begin to make songs of his exploits. There is a 10% chance per week that a notorious foe (human or otherwise) begins to boast about his ability to defeat the character; if the character does not respond to this challenge, he automatically loses 10 enech points.

When a character amasses 90 enech points, he is automatically invited to join the retinue of his tribal king (or perhaps the high king, if there is one). The character is under no obligation to accept, but refusal insults the king and the character suffers a -10% penalty to all NPC reaction rolls with the king and his followers thereafter.

When a character amasses 95 enech points, he is considered a great hero, and his exploits are sung throughout the land. The character automatically gains a +10% bonus on all reaction rolls with characters of lesser rank and a -10% penalty with creatures of opposite alignment or belief. Essentially, those who might like the character are inclined to treat him with more respect, and those who would dislike the character hate him more out of jealousy.

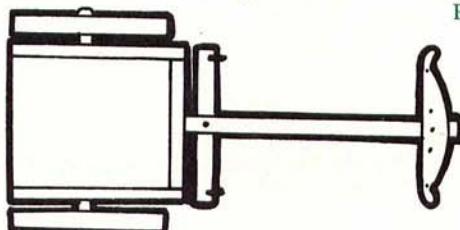
No character can have more than 100 enech points.

#### a celtic chariot



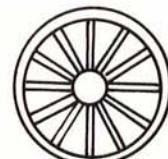
Charioteer crouches, warrior stands behind

Anchor points for harness



Rings for reins

12-spoked wheel also used



1 foot

Open chariot side also used



Table 17: Enech Awards

Event	Enech Award
Attempting a feat and failing	-2
Avenging murder of kinsman	+5
Being caught lying	-1
Being taken prisoner	-5*
Breaking one's word	-2*
Breaking an oath	-5*
Defeating feud enemy	+4
Defeating superior opponent of same class	+1/lvl above
Defeating monsters	+1/2000 XP**
Kin-slaying	-5
Losing to inferior opponent of same class	-2/lvl below
Mastering a feat	+2/slot
Nonweapon proficiency	+1/2 slots
Performing a feat successfully	+1/slot
Refusing a contest	-2
Serving a powerful king	+2*
Specializing in a weapon	+1/slot
Winning fidchell game	loser's modifier

\* Doubled for fighters and rangers

\*\* Round down. Applies only to points earned for defeating a single creature.

## Glossary



**Aes Dana**— Literally “the gifted people”; the priesthood and skilled craftsmen, making up the middle class of Celtic society.

**Afanc**— A reptilian lake-dwelling monster.

**Albu**— The Celtic name for Britain.

**Asrai**— An aquatic humanoid race, similar to nixies.

**Baobhan sith**— Pronounced baavan shee. A vampiric female creature.

**Beltaine**— Festival marking the start of Summer, about May 1st. Traces survive in May Day celebrations.

**Ben-varrey**— A race of Celtic merfolk.

**Boobrie**— A giant water-bird.

**Book of Invasions**— One of two great works of Irish literature; the other is the *Tain Bo Cuailnge* (q.v.). The *Book of Invasions*, or Book of Conquests, tells of successive waves of settlers coming to Ireland.

**Brithem**— A caste of professional jurists in early Ireland.

**Broch**— A circular tower of unmortared stone, common in Scotland.

**Brythonic**— See P-Celtic.

**Celtiberians**— Celts who migrated into Spain and Portugal.

**Civitas**— The Latin name for a Celtic tribe. See Tuath.

**Cumal**— An Irish unit of value, equivalent to one female slave, seven milking cows or 35 acres of land.

**Cu Sidhe**— Pronounced coo shee. The hounds of the sidhe.

**Cwn Annwn**— Pronounced coon annoon. The Welsh name for Cu Sidhe (q.v.).

**Cymru**— Pronounced coomri. The modern Welsh name for Wales.

**Dames Vertes**— The French name for boisterous young female sidhe, who delight in playing tricks on male travelers in the forests.

**Daoine Sidhe**— Pronounced theena shee. The Irish name most commonly used for the sidhe, especially where dealings have been friendly.

**Dicenn**— A kinless individual. The word actually means “headless.”

**Enech**— Honor (literally “face”).

**Eriu**— The Celtic name for Ireland.

**Ethane**— The Greek name for a Celtic tribe. See Tuath.

**Fachan**— A violent monster with one leg, one arm, and one eye.

**Falcata**— A single-edged broadsword used by the Celts of northern Spain in the 4th-1st centuries B.C.

**Fenette**— A Gaulish river-dwelling humanoid creature.

**Fiana**— A warband or chief's retinue; originally, the band of warriors following Fionn Mac Cumhail (q.v.).

**Fidchell**— The Irish name for a popular boardgame, apparently much like Fox and Geese.

**Fionn Mac Cumhail**— A legendary Irish king and leader of the fiana (q.v.). His name is sometimes spelled Finn MacCool. **Fliath**— The warrior nobility of Celtic society.

**Fomorians**— A race of huge, ugly, and brutal creatures which fought with all the various races of Ireland.

**Fool**— A renegade sidhe who delights in tormenting humans.

**Gae Bolga**— Both a barbed spear and a difficult but deadly feat of arms involving a barbed spear.

**Galatians**— A Celtic people who settled in what is now Turkey in 270 B.C.

**Ganconer**— A young male sidhe who dallies with human maidens, often breaking their hearts in the process.

**Geas**— A mystical prohibition (plural gesae) on a character, which leads to great misfortune if it is broken.

**Goidelic**— See Q-Celtic.

**Gwragedd Annwn**— Pronounced gooRAG-eth ANNoon. The Welsh name for a swanmay.

**Gwyddbwyl**— Pronounced gwID-bull. The Welsh name for the game of fidchell (q.v.).

**Hurley**— a game related to field hockey.

**Imbolc**— Festival marking the start of Spring, celebrated about February 1st.

**Korrigan**— A Gaulish nymph, thought to be the female counterpart of korred.

**Lamignac**— A Gaulish water-nymph.

**La Tene**— Named after a site in Switzerland, this is the name given by archaeologists to the period of the fullest flowering of Celtic culture during the Iron Age, from the 5th century B.C. to the 1st century A.D.

**Leanan Sidhe**— Pronounced LANawn shee. A female sidhe who enjoys patronizing human artists and craftsmen, inspiring them to produce masterpieces but leaving them burnt-out and broken.

**Lugnasadh**— Festival marking the beginning of Fall, celebrated about August 1st.

**Mabinogion**— A Welsh history, written down in the Middle Ages, involving myth, fantasy, and some early stories of King Arthur.

**Manteis**— A Celtic seer or diviner.

**Nuckelavee**— An evil centaur-like creature.

**Ogham**— A form of writing on stone.

**Oppidum**— Literally “town,” the term is used by archaeologists to refer to large Celtic settlements of the pre-Roman period, which seem to have functioned as walled towns rather than as fortresses. The plural is oppida.

**P-Celtic**— A group of Celtic dialects including Welsh and Breton and possibly the Celtic languages of Britain and Gaul. Also known as Brythonic.

**Pagus**— The Latin name for a Celtic clan.

**Phouka**— Pronounced FOO-ka. A chaotic shapechanging monster which delights in tricking humans.

**Picts**— A people who lived in eastern Scotland in the first few centuries A.D. and may or may not have been Celtic.

**Q-Celtic**— A group of Celtic dialects including Scots Gaelic and Irish Gaelic. Also known as Goidelic.

**Rath**— Also known as the ring-fort; a type of Celtic fortification common in Ireland.

**Riastarthae**— Also known as warp-frenzy. A kind of berserk fit.

**Salmon Leap**— A heroic feat involving a standing high jump.

**Samhain**— The Celtic New Year festival, celebrated about November 1st. Now celebrated as Halloween.

**Set**— An Irish unit of value, equivalent to one milking cow.

**Sidhe**— Pronounced shee. A nonhuman race similar to elves; the remnants of the Tuatha De Danann (q.v.). The word Sidhe is both singular and plural.

**Stater**— A gold coin, originally Greek, copied by many Gaulish and British tribes in the first century B.C.

**Tain Bo Cuailnge**— Also known simply as The Tain. An Irish epic, sometimes compared to Homer's Iliad. The title means ‘The Cattle-Raid of Cooley.’

**Tir Nan Og**— Legendary islands to the west of the Celtic world. Thought by some to be the afterworld and by others to be a memory of Atlantis.

**Tuath**— A tribe or people.

**Unetice**— Also known as the Urnfield Culture. A proto-Celtic people who emerged in Czechoslovakia in the Bronze Age.

**Urnfield**— See Unetice.

**Vates**— A Latin term for the manteis (q.v.).

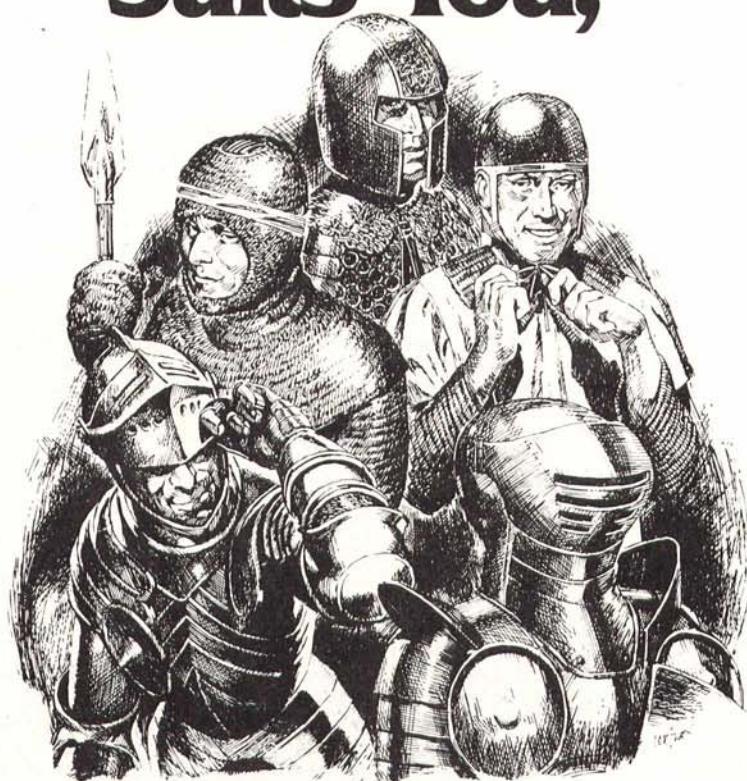
**Warp-frenzy**— See Riastarthae.

**Water-horse**— An aquatic monster which can take the form of a horse.

**Water leaper**— A small aquatic monster that attacks fishermen and unwary waders.



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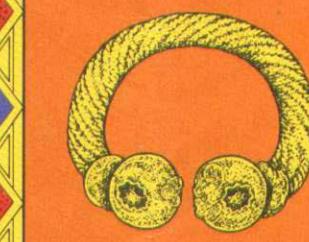
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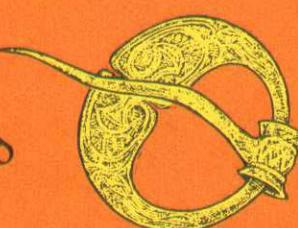
a Celtic land

Scythia

a Non-Celtic land

Pyrenees

mountain ranges



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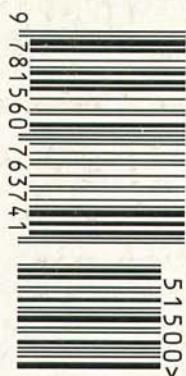
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